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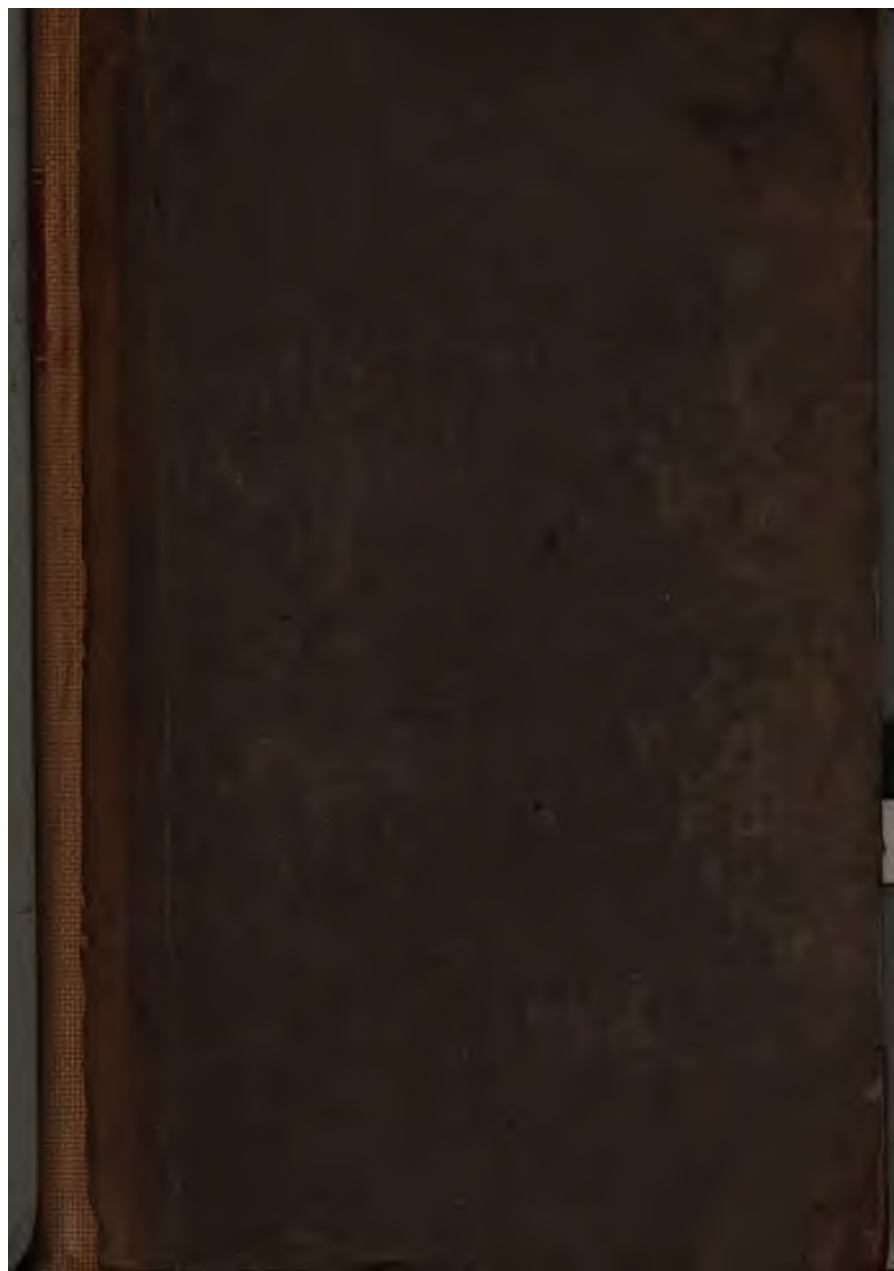
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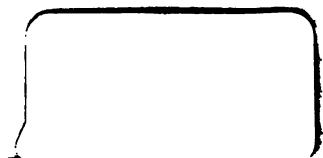
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EMILY DE VARMONT;

OR

DIVORCE

DICTATED BY NECESSITY;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

The Amours of Father Sévin.

FROM THE FRENCH OF LOUVET,

Late President of the National Convention of France,
Author of *Faughlas*, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON,

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1798.

EMILY DE VARMONT.

EMILY TO DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, 6th July, 4 in the morning.

HE invited me to breakfast, offering me a glass of pure water, a few cherries, and a slice of brown bread. I saw him eager to attend on his servant. But if he had not expressed the most lively interest for my welfare, what should I have been able to say to him? Nothing short of the repeated marks of his benevolence could have inspired me with sufficient courage to enter into those explanations which I found it necessary to give him.

VOL. II.

B

“ Sir,” said I to him, “ unless you confine to your own bosom those imperfect disclosures which I find it necessary to make to you”

“ And why imperfect disclosures ?” said he, hastily interrupting me.

“ Because my fate is too dreadful to relate,” replied I. “ Alas ! what an alleviation it would be to me in my misfortunes, if they were of such a nature as to allow me, without shuddering with horror, to give you a full and circumstantial detail of them ! But at least it is not I who have reason to blush for those secrets which I am obliged to conceal from you : — no ! I solemnly swear to you, it is not on me that the shame falls. And you may give credit to my assertion ; for though dissimula-

tion may on some occasions be allowable, I know that perjury is in every instance unpardonable.—You shall hear as much of my misfortunes as it is possible for me to disclose :—please nevertheless to recollect that this confidence, limited as it must necessarily be, still requires inviolable secrecy on your part. A single word may ruin me — a single word may enable my enemies to trace my flight : and I know them to be capable of coming even to this spot, and tearing me away from the obscure but peaceful life which you give me reason to expect with you. — Sir,” continued I, “ the unjust hatred with which my relatives have persecuted me, has been the source of all my misfortunes.”

“ The blind friendship of mine,” cried he, “ has nearly ruined me.”

“ They attempted to make me a nun.”

“ They succeeded in making me a priest.”

“ I escaped — excuse me from telling by what means — from the convent where their avaricious cruelty hoped to bury me.”

“ I was unable to escape from the seminary where their ambitious tenderness kept me confined.”

“ A man into whose power a crime had put me, basely took advantage of my distress, and endeavoured to seduce me.”

This last disclosure appeared to make

a powerful impression on the generous young man to whom I was relating my story. The increase of my misfortunes more strongly interested him : all his remaining cheerfulness immediately vanished. He sighed, Dorothy — he recollected himself — and with a grave tone said to me

“ That a man, dazzled, transported with the first sight of your beauty, should be unable to repel desire, — and that desire soon gives birth to hope, — is what I can well conceive. — But that, after having heard you speak — after having felt the nearer effect of those virtuous charms which are equally conspicuous in your modest discourse, your decent demeanour, and every feature of your angelic countenance, — that, after having admired the winning graces of

your ingenuous candor, he should not feel his mind deeply impressed with that respect which your innocent attractions demand, — that he should still continue to harbour guilty designs, and madly indulge the hope of success, — that indeed is what surpasses my comprehension. — Let me, however, not interrupt your narrative : — proceed.”

“ He endeavoured to seduce me. A new crime rescued me from his hands, and has thrown me into yours, which cannot but be innocent and pure.”

“ They have hitherto been so,” cried he, “ and shall ever continue the same.”

“ At present I do not possess the smallest remnant of those numerous ad-

vantages with which fortune had for a while indulged me. There no longer exists for me any family connection — I have even lost my very name.”

“ Here,” replied he with his former good humour, “ you may find names enough : I have the whole calendar by heart. Let’s see — let us choose one the most worthy of you — the softest, the sweetest, the finest in the whole list — Julia, for instance. — Julia ? — no ! that would be too great a trespass on all the rules of propriety : Julia is too fine a name for the niece of a poor country priest : — the vicar-general would complain of it. We can no otherwise escape censure than by using the diminutive — let your name then be Juliette : but be not uneasy on that score ; for not a hair on your head will

grow the worse in consequence of it.—
This day," continued he, " you shall not bear a part in my little domestic labours:—the day of your arrival is a holiday, and I invite you to devote it to rest. If you prefer it nevertheless, you may amuse yourself in examining the different parts of your new habitation. For my part, it is with regret I quit you: but I must go perform some little works in my garden which require my immediate attention."

Although, Dorothy, the behaviour and situation of this young man equally tend to inspire me with confidence, I nevertheless acknowledge that I have still some reason to be uneasy. My ears have very much deceived me, or I several times in the course of the evening heard my new uncle repeat the

words " Priests ought to be married." It was, I grant, in a low voice that he pronounced the phrase, which is at least somewhat singular: but at the end of supper he spoke it more distinctly, and, suddenly starting up from table, ran into an adjoining apartment, whence he brought a bass viol, on which he played for some time, but with an absent air, and deeply immersed in thought.

It was now growing late, and yet my uncle showed no inclination to put an end to his music. I thought it my duty to wish him a good night. — Too much occupied with his own thoughts to make me a reply, he mechanically rose from his seat, and, without uttering a syllable, but still continuing to play on his bass, conducted me to the door of

the little apartment which was destined for my bed-chamber.

It is here, my dear Dorothy, that I have to acknowledge a striking instance of my weakness. On seeing myself between four naked walls hardly covered with white-wash—in a kind of cock-loft—the whole furniture consisting of a mean pallet bed without curtains, three chairs with scarce a rush remaining in their seats, a worm-eaten table, a fragment of a looking-glass, and the shattered remains of a kneeling desk,—I could not help shedding a few tears. Fool that I was! is not peace of mind the most valuable of all blessings? and does that depend on the vain decoration of the apartments which we inhabit? Is not the most humble cottage, while it screens us from the vices of the rich—

is it not a thousand times preferable to their pompous palaces, where all the base and cruel passions revel without controul? It is — I know it by experience — an experience which was painful in the first instance, but now affords me a pleasing reverse. For several weeks past, tormented by a thousand anxieties beneath a gilded roof, I could not close my eyes without terror: last night in a garret I enjoyed a peaceful sleep: and this morning at the break of day, with my mind disengaged, my memory fresh, my imagination calm and collected, I sit down to give you an account of the events of yesterday, without fearing the inquisitive eyes of any designing enemy, and fully persuaded that there is no circumstance in my new situation but must excite a tender inter-

est, or an anxious curiosity, in the bosom of my sister.

But tell me, I pray you, my dear Dorothy, what do you think of that frequent exclamation of my uncle, at which I am still so much astonished, that I could find no great difficulty in persuading myself that I must have mistaken his words? — What ! can a priest have passions, like other men ? Will not my honour, as well as my life, be in perfect safety in a presbytery ? Or do I blindly and hastily indulge an ill-founded hope ? Am I mistaken in supposing my misfortunes at an end ? Ah, Bovile ! thou who from the abode of the blessed must still look down with pleasure on thy Emily who cherishes thy virtues in fond remembrance, — generous Bovile, do thou from heaven,

whence thou canst watch over her fate,—do thou protect thy bride, compassionate her distresses, and guide her steps into the paths of safety ! Through what dreadful storms of persecution and suffering have her unrelenting enemies driven her to this harbour, where she begins, perhaps with too great a degree of confident security, to enjoy a deceitful calm which is to be of short duration !

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Five in the afternoon.

MY dear Dorothy, my apprehensions are entirely removed. This morning, as soon as I made my appearance, my uncle ran to meet me, and accosted me in these words —

“ My good niece, as it may happen that the indiscreet curiosity of many of our neighbours will soon importune you with embarrassing questions, you must be made acquainted with the family of which you are become a member. Jerom Sévin, the father of your uncle, is neither more nor less than superintendent of the health of the quadrupeds in

his village. His ancestors, for upwards of a century past, have been the sole farriers and horse-doctors in the parish of Nanterre. And heaven probably intended me also to succeed in turn to the family employment of shoeing and physicking the Rozinantes of the surrounding district. Alas! in luckless hour did the rage of aggrandisement seize my parents' bosoms! By means of this black coat, they hoped to make my fortune, and secure their own salvation. Ah! may their expectations not be entirely disappointed! may they be as happy in the other world as I am doomed to be poor in this! In this world, my niece, whoever is unskilled in adulation, is sure never to rise to preferment: and a man might have peacefully and successfully practised the trade of curing the diseases of horses, who is totally ig-

ignorant of the art of flattering the passions of men. I was nevertheless the favourite curate of a rich Norman rector, a man, too, who possessed some interest. But in order to derive any advantage from his friendship, I must have submitted to pay my court regularly to the vicar-general's housekeeper, to my diocesan's footmen, to his secretary whose interest and protection were not to be obtained without assiduous labour and attention, — to his favourite little dog — to his quarterly valet-de-chambre — and to his weekly mistress. I never could submit to such abject servility: and the consequence was, that my protector, notwithstanding all his interest, was unable to do any thing better for me than to get me thrust into this ruinous presbytery, — this *ne-plus-ultra* of my clerical career, — where I am con-

demned to spend the remainder of my days on the enormous annual income of — five hundred livres*! At the news of my promotion, however, my poor father and mother were near losing their senses with excessive joy. She, good woman! confidently relying on my powerful intercession with the holy virgin and all the saints in the calendar, holds herself quite certain of obtaining a comfortable niche in paradise: she already fancies she sees the gates wide open to receive her, — and that, to gain admission, she has only to mention my name. My father, somewhat more attentive to worldly honours, is quite in an ecstasy to think that the loftiest heads in the village bow to his son. I am the constant theme of discourse with both.

* About twenty pounds sterling.

my parents, and they never speak of me but with pride, admiration, and respect. 'The Reverend Father Sévin!' a fine title, to be sure! But how would the poor simple pair be astonished if I were to take the trouble of convincing them that the Reverend Father Sévin would have enjoyed a much greater portion of content and happiness in the obscure and laborious employment of his forefathers! — I grant, indeed, there is no great labour in muttering over a few prayers in Latin—a language in which I may safely commit a thousand blunders without fear of detection, since none of my parishioners understand a syllable of it: nor is it a difficult task to hold forth once a week in that convenient rostrum, where the orator enjoys the prescriptive right of never arguing wrong. And besides, I conceive

that such of my brethren of the cloth as are, like me, the offspring of village parents, feel their vanity wonderfully flattered by those marks of profound respect which they receive from those who before were their equals or even their superiors — and that they are equally gratified with the more useful honour which they enjoy, of periodically taking their seat at table with the squire's lady. But these enjoyments, which may truly be called artificial — these lesser pleasures annexed to our station — are they not too dearly, too cruelly purchased by the sacrifice of those real pleasures to which nature every day invites us — but of which we are bound constantly to repress the desire and avoid the opportunities? For, where can you find a priest so utterly dead to all the passions incident to human nature, that he

can, without an inward uneasiness, publish the banns of marriage,— can listen without emotion to the confession of a handsome young woman's frailties, — and, ever ready, by virtue of the matrimonial formula, to unite two lovers in the bands of wedlock, can, without feeling his heart corroded by envy at their happier lot, thus grant to all comers a permission the most charming and desirable, which the poor unfortunate wretch does not himself enjoy?

“ This discourse must no doubt surprise you,” continued he with warmth : “ but I should be mortified to the soul, if I thought it excited any uneasiness in your bosom. The first sight of your charms may possibly have dazzled my eyes and staggered my virtue : but if I am at all acquainted with my own

heart, my weakness was but momentary and transient. Even if I were not perfectly convinced of your innocence — even if I entertained a less exalted idea of the duties of hospitality which I owe to you — at least I flatter myself I should still retain sufficient courage and honour to remember and respect the sacred vows by which I am bound. The obligation of vows must be held inviolable : and mine — however severe the struggles and combats they may cost me — shall be religiously observed until that day, to which I cannot help looking forward, — that happy day, when I shall be released from them by a law the most humane that ever was enacted. In the mean time, you must indulgently bear with the complaints which suffering nature dictates ; and permit me to reveal, in your hearing,

the same sentiment which in spite of myself I cannot help disclosing to all around me : in a word prepare yourself to listen to me with patience, when, fifty times a day, I repeat my favourite phrase — ‘ Priests ought to be married.’

“ If you only except these repetitions, you need not be apprehensive of finding me very tiresome. By an effect of my disposition, which is naturally of an accommodating turn, I compound with my misfortunes, and view them in as favourable a point of light as circumstances will allow. If I have not as yet been able to contract a liking for my situation, at least I have, without any very extraordinary efforts, reconciled myself to endure it with cheerfulness and good humour : and to render it in

a short time desirable in my eyes, perhaps nothing more is wanting than a small accession of income; sufficient to enable me, without the assistance of my friends, to relieve the extreme poverty and distress of my wretched parishioners."

The concluding remarks of my adoptive uncle pleased me beyond measure, my dear Dorothy : but what most of all delighted me, was to see him soon afford a substantial proof that it was not in his words alone that the desire of doing good was conspicuous. We had passed some hours in the garden → I in tying up the straggling branches to the stakes and treillis. — he, alternately handling the spade and the rake. The pure air, the exercise, and the heat of the day, had together contributed to ex-

cite his ardent thirst and keen appetite. We were now seated at table ; and you would have imagined that he alone was ready to devour for his own share the dish of vegetables which was prepared for our joint repast, and to empty the bottle which he had uncorked. Suddenly, however, instead of filling his own glass, he asked me if I liked wine. Almost displeased at my answer, he protested that I was to blame in never drinking any, and that he himself had good reason to like it. " Nevertheless," said he, " I tremble at the idea of being reduced on the present occasion to drink nothing but pure water. On the slightest indisposition of the inhabitants of great cities, they are immediately put upon a low regimen : and that is right : but it is good nourishing broth and wine that my peasants require, who are

never sick but through excess of fatigue and inanition. And as there is," continued he, pointing to the precious bottle — "as there is in the village a poor valetudinarian to whom this is absolutely necessary, — does it not clearly follow, that I am in duty bound to resign it to him, — I, to whom it would be a superfluous luxury; since, thank God, I enjoy perfect health? Go, therefore, Juliette, — inquire for the cabin of Lucas the weaver: — go — let him receive from your hand this salutary present. By your appearance, your language, the value of your gift, his wretched family will think you; at the very least, an angel come down from heaven to their relief. But do you, my child, decline the honour of an apotheosis, and modestly acknowledge that you are but

a mortal, — and, what is worse, the niece of the poor priest who sends you.”

Oh! sister! if you knew with what transports the poor people received me — how many thanks they lavished on me — what praises they bestowed on their excellent pastor! Next to the singular generosity of their benefactor, it is impossible to conceive any thing more laughably affecting than the extravagant acknowledgments of gratitude on the part of the poor family on whom the obligation was conferred. At my return to the presbytery, I had a smile on my cheek, and tears in my eyes.

“ ’Tis well!” said he: “ ’tis very well! I see you are moved: — you have a good heart.” — Then affectionately squeezing my hand, “Juliette,” continued he, “I

would have readily executed the commission myself: but I preferred indulging you with the pleasure of performing that office."

Dorothy, my whole soul is yet affected with that moving scene.—I begin to expect that peaceful days, and even sweet tranquil pleasures, await me here.

EMILY DE VARMONT.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, July 7.

ALL my uncle's inclinations and propensities denote sensibility of soul. — This evening, in a kind of saloon, I saw various instruments of music. I certainly was not in a state of mind sufficiently calm and disengaged to try my feeble talents: I, therefore, immediately embraced the resolution of not acknowledging that I possessed any. "Egad!" said my uncle, "if you feel any inclination, I'll teach you music, — as much of it at least as I myself am master of. Do not think lightly of that accomplishment: it is a valuable resource in misfortune. I maintain that there is no for-

row so great, which may not be lulled to sleep by a fine composition of Gluck or Piccini. Nay, I will not be contradicted! — I am a friend to all mankind: and when I feel the *ennui* of solitude ready to sink me into the earth — you see that bass? — well! I seize hold of it, and scrape it with might and main. My most violent vapours do not long resist its influence. 'Tis quite a different affair when we have a concert: I then fancy myself in heaven. — You are surpris'd? — yes, my niece, poor and shabby as you see me, I have concerts here, — I have concerts, my niece! — but let me explain — It is visible that this forte-piano cannot belong to me — three years' income of my living would not purchase it! It belongs to a lady, who has lent it to me at her brother's request. The brother is my intimate

friend ; and I am proud to boast of his acquaintance ; for he is an amiable young man, whose equal is hardly to be found. His sister, when she accompanies him to my humble abode, sits down to the piano, — he takes up a violin, — their master breathes on the soul-moving clarinet — and the trio sets me quite in raptures. Nevertheless I have such cogent reasons for preferring the addition of a fourth instrument, that they must necessarily admit me as one of the party. It is true indeed that I occasionally interrupt the harmony of the concert by not keeping exact time — but what is to be done? these are the little inconveniences attached to the pursuit : and where can you find a rose without thorns? The greatest drawback on the pleasure of our concerts arises from the master : I am in constant dread

of seeing him dislocate his ankle in beating time for me when I have gone astray What a terrible man he is at the stamp of the foot ! Luckily, his pupils, less impatient than their teacher, have accustomed themselves to bear with my frequent slips : and in fact my bass, however indifferently played on, inspires me with such rapturous ecstasies, that it would be cruelty to debar me from it. You shall see, Juliette, you shall see, that it is the most delightful thing in the world : — the most delightful ? — No ! I forget myself — Ah ! how often have I wished that I were permitted to marry a woman who had a taste for music ! My niece, priests ought to be married !”

At these words he became thoughtful and melancholy : but soon flying to

that instrument, the soother of all his sorrows, " Let us see," said he — " let us try to banish care." — He continued to play for above an hour, as on the preceding day: and, as was the case before, I at length retired, seemingly unperceived by him.

EMILY TO DOROTHY.

9th July, nine at night.

HOW great is still my astonishment, Dorothy! Who can that young man be, who, presenting to my eyes the living likeness of one of his sex whom I have reason to fear, and perhaps a right to hate, has nevertheless excited in my bosom only a kind of surprise wholly devoid of terror? What can be the cause of the present tumult in my breast—these lively emotions which I never felt before—this secret agitation, unaccompanied by any sensations of a painful nature? In a word, whence comes it that I experience a certain feeling of internal satisfaction, of which I vainly

endeavour to discover the motive? — Ah! is it not in consequence of the condition to which I am reduced — a condition so wretched, that I cannot help considering myself as uncommonly happy when no new misfortune befalls me?

This afternoon I was employed in one of my domestic duties, which it is unnecessary to But why conceal the circumstance? Have I so soon forgotten what my uncle said to me not an hour ago, as a consolation for my weakness? Can that degradation which attaches to every servile condition, extend to an unfortunate woman, who, without having merited such humiliation, has nevertheless learned to resign herself to it? Or is it true that there are some professions which are in themselves ignominious? Is it not an absurd

prejudice which stamps the character of ignominy on employments which have the sanction of our manners and our laws,—and against which no other reproach lies than their humble usefulness, and their painful labours, very inadequately compensated? Is there a station — however despised by the vulgar herd of mankind, — however contemptible in the eyes of those proud disdainful mortals who think that Nature has purposely framed them to be the lords of the earth, and has created another race of beings to be their slaves and drudges — is there, I say, a station which may not be rendered honourable by the practice of those virtues that are peculiar to it, united with sentiments worthy of a better condition?

No, Dorothy! certainly there is none. My uncle was right—I feel the force

of his arguments, confirmed by the powerful testimony of my own conscience, so calm, so undisturbed ! I feel it, by the noble pride that accompanies those exertions which are necessary in order to bear up courageously against the pressure of misfortune. I must however entreat you to pardon my having yielded for a moment to the suggestions of a mistaken pride :—excuse my transient weakness — for I now blush only at the idea of having attempted to withhold from you the avowal of a circumstance so trifling and unimportant. The domestic employment in which I was occupied, was that of plaiting and ironing the best of the poor priest's two surplices.

Suddenly I thought I heard, in the vicinity of the presbytery, a noise which did not concern me, but which made

my uncle start from his seat — “ My young friend returned ! ” cried he, hurrying to the door, and almost immediately introduced a youth Conceive, Dorothy, my astonishment, on beholding Murville before me !

But, no, it was not Murville — Although the eyes of any other person would have found in him a most perfect resemblance, I perceived a very striking difference ; nor was I, after the first glance, deceived. I saw indeed the shape and figure of my persecutor, but could not discover either his port or his physiognomy.

His port, which bespeaks so great a degree of confident assurance, may perhaps appear more imposing ; but that of the young stranger is equally no-

ble and striking, and I observed in it certain natural graces, of which the other is destitute — The fine figure of Murville is, I own, animated by that kind of vivacity which generally announces a superior degree of intelligence: but it is unaccompanied by that mixture of sweetness which tempers the ardour of the youth I am describing, — that ray of gentle kindness which beams from his countenance, and sheds the greatest lustre over his whole person. — Had it been Murville, he would have immediately accosted me with all that forward gallantry which is not over-respectful: — the stranger, on the contrary, stopped short at first sight of me, and remained for a while motionless at the door. — He stood surprised, disconcerted, and almost in a tremor. He hesitated, as if some hid-

den danger attended his entrance into the house. I even observed him, whilst he cast a few stolen glances towards me—I observed him blush several times — but I doubt whether Murville ever blushed in his life : — and it is more than probable he would think himself irreparably disgraced if ever he should chance to appear disconcerted in presence of a woman.

No, Dorothy, it is not my persecutor : this young man, although he presents to my eyes the living likeness of Murville, is incapable of alarming me. With so strong a resemblance of features, I do not conceive it possible to find another instance of a countenance so widely different.

For some time he continued to stand

motionless; and I had my whole attention rivetted on him, when suddenly my unfortunate uncle recalled it to another object, by crying out in a tone of anguish, "My niece! ah! my surplice! my best surplice! my niece! my best surplice is burning!"

In fact, having my hand raised when the young man made his appearance,—and having afterwards insensibly lowered it—the hot iron which I held had rested on the middle of the surplice, and burned a large hole in it.

Father Sévin, considerably agitated by the accident, was beginning to reprimand Juliette, when the young stranger advanced, and stammered out in my defence a few words of apology, which could not fail of success,

since my uncle is incapable of harbouring resentment against any human being. On this occasion his good humour returned rather sooner than I could have wished, and he indulged it at the expense of his niece and his friend. He complimented the young man on his eagerness to defend the slip of a handsome girl: then addressing Juliette, he asked with a smile, whence proceeded that long absence of mind which the sight of a handsome young fellow had caused. — I know not how it happened — but the good-humoured raillery of the honest priest, which on many other occasions had never displeased me, was in this instance extremely irksome: — I should have been a thousand times better pleased that his anger had continued — I would have given the world to hear

him begin to scold me again. — Impatient to escape from his jokes, I seized the first pretext that I could devise, and ran to lock myself up in my apartment, where, in order to relieve and divert my thoughts, I sat down to write you an account of every circumstance that had occurred.

I was nevertheless somewhat impatient to learn the name of the young man, — his family — his but I hear him taking his leave — I hear my uncle calling me — Dorothy, adieu!

DOLERVAL TO MURVILLE.

Tours, 9th July, 11 at night.

OH! brother! participate my joy. I have just seen her. She looks well, — very well, — better perhaps than ever you thought her in the days of her greatest beauty. No doubt, my arrival, which she did not expect so soon, contributed not a little. . . . Did I tell you that I was setting out on a journey? — a lucky journey — much more fortunate than I had ventured to hope: — for it did not long separate me from her; and my quick return has inspired her with such joy! — her joy is very natural: — if you did but know how near she was to eternity! But her dangers are all at an end. Oh happiness

unspeakable ! she is now safe ! I warrant her safe. Bovile Bovile shall not drag her after him to the grave.

It is not, however, that she has ceased to love Bovile. Ah ! if the heart of Eleonora were capable of changing, must we not think that there is not a woman upon earth, whose affections are constant ? — It were cruel to entertain such an idea. — No ! my sister has not ceased to cherish her fond affection for Bovile : but, as you remarked to me in one of your letters, there is no sorrow whose duration is eternal : sooner or later a happy day shines on the unfortunate — a day which dries up their tears. — But, while I am on the subject of Eleonora's grief, let me observe that she feels, as you may naturally conceive, an anxi-

ous desire to hear a circumstantial account of the last moments of Bovile. "His last moments," did I say? — I have perhaps used an improper expression: — until matters are more satisfactorily cleared up, I should say "his last exploits;" for in short his fate is not yet fully ascertained. There exist strong reasons for presuming that he is dead: the fact however is not confirmed. It is indeed but too certain that the enemies of that brave man have basely sacrificed him: but is it equally certain that they have succeeded in compassing his destruction? can any man positively swear that Bovile is dead? — Excuse these doubts, brother! — ah! would to heaven that I myself could think them somewhat better founded than they are! I only repeat them — they originate with my sister: — her tenderness

takes a pleasure in indulging them; and it is vain to expect that her reason should make an effort to dispel them. Is it not usual with the unfortunate, eagerly to embrace even the shadow of hope? — If, however, she must at length renounce her hopes — if it becomes certain that Bovile has perished — do you think his enemies will dare to fill up the measure of their crimes by soliciting the confiscation of his property — an end which they cannot attain without affixing a brand of infamy on his memory?

I request, Murville, that you will answer all my questions. — In the city where you live, it is easy to collect intelligence. Do not neglect to make all the necessary inquiries; and haste to transmit me this last information which we desire.

Good night, brother ! I quit you rather abruptly : — you will excuse me — I feel myself so uneasy ! — 'tis not on my sister's account — her situation is no longer such as to alarm me — but I have this evening met with so singular an adventure ! — my surprise I am all confusion ! — good night, brother — adieu !

EMILY to DOROTHY.

10th July, 5 in the morning.

WHAT a strange fate is mine ! when not tormented by cruel adversity, my peace of mind is still to lie at the mercy of strange whimsical incidents. At the risk of my life, I escaped from that prison where I was kept confined by the most indelicate of lovers : and all I have gained by the change, was a temporary refuge in an asylum which does not promise to afford me much security ; since, even in this retreat, I still continue under the eye, as it were, and within the reach, of my persecutor. That young man whom I viewed without alarm, — I should have trembled at the sight of him ! — not that I have

any reason to think he harbours the most distant design of injuring me: — but he may ruin me unintentionally: — he may, Dorothy, since he is Murville's brother.

Thus it appears that the long-continued emotion I experienced yesterday, was nothing else than a presentiment of the critical situation to which I was so soon to be reduced; — and the turbid agitation of my bosom at this moment is but a necessary consequence of this new change in my affairs.

In fact, although I may be allowed to hope that there will not occur such an extraordinary combination of circumstances as shall discover the unfortunate sister of Varmont, — have I not good reason to dread lest the slightest

indication should betray me, as Mademoiselle Terville? May it not happen, for instance, that, in writing to his brother, this young man should drop a few words concerning But why should I imagine any such thing? — why should Monsieur Dolerval make me the subject of his correspondence with Murville? By what chance could it happen that he should entertain him with any account of Juliette — of an obscure servant maid? — I did not reflect on the absurdity of the idea — But what a dreadful companion is fear! how easily it finds nourishment in every casual circumstance, when once the imagination is powerfully affected! — Nevertheless it is not wholly unreasonable to suppose that he may one day — quite *en passant* — make some slight mention of me in one of his letters, since you see that I,

on the other hand, devote this letter entirely to him. — A fine comparison, truly ! — but how great the difference ! — the care of my personal safety must often call my attention to that young man : but what interest can he feel, sufficient to make me the object of his thoughts ? — I see plainly that vanity and self-love bewilder me : — I fancy dangers where none exist.

True ! but they are not all equally imaginary : I have other causes to excite my apprehensions, which are but too well grounded. May not Murville, for instance, at the moment when I should least expect it, come to spend a few days with his brother and sister in the city of Tours, so near to the hamlet where I am concealed ? And, in such case, what is there to prevent a meet-

ing with which I should be constantly threatened? There remains but one mode; and that is, quickly to..... but I am called: — my dear Dorothy, adieu!

EMILY TO DOROTHY.

Seven in the evening.

I HAVE adopted, my dear sister, the only measure which suited my present condition — that of reminding my benefactor of the solemn promise he had made me, never to reveal to any person what I had told him respecting my misfortunes. The good priest renewed his promise, and protested that all his acquaintance should continue impressed with the idea that I really was his niece, and that even his young friend should never be taught to consider me in any other light. — On second thoughts, however, I anticipate in this affair a powerful resource, of a quite contrary nature, in reserve for a future

emergency. I cannot possibly think that the principles and conduct of this young man bear any resemblance to those of his brother. Every thing that I discover in him seems to announce that he possesses refined sentiments and an exalted soul. His whole external appearance is modest and decorous — a pre-possessing gentleness beams on his countenance, — his air is full of candor and benevolence. — But I have already told you all this, I believe. — Well! no matter — you will excuse a few repetitions. — Sister Dorothy! he has an excellent heart! most excellent indeed; if I may depend on my uncle's account of him. — He is my uncle's intimate friend! — that circumstance alone speaks highly in his favour. — Well, then! I also must endeavour to gain his esteem, — to engage his atten-

tion, — and even excite his curiosity. I wish, that, before he is acquainted with my fate, he should take an interest in it: — in short, I wish to have it in my power — if circumstances should ever render such a step necessary — safely to reveal to him a part of my past misfortunes and my present apprehensions; and thus interpose between Murville and me a new protector, who may warn me of his approach, — who may prevent him from intruding on the place of my retreat, — and whose attentive care may constantly watch over my safety. — Don't you think, Dorothy, that, in my present critical situation, it strongly behoves me to prepare every imaginable resource, — and provide before-hand all possible means of security? — I think I hear a knocking at the door — I must run to open it.

I was mistaken — there was nobody at the door. — It is nevertheless very near seven o' clock: and my uncle had told me that his young friend came to see him every day at six, at the latest. Why is he not yet come? — Am I to suppose that the presence of a third person would render the society of his friend less agreeable? — But how could that be the case? how could my presence be any inconvenience to them? I cannot possibly prove any bar to the freedom of their conversation, since I never take a part in it. Yesterday, for instance, I did not say a single word. — Ha! now I have it! that must be the circumstance which has displeased him! I suppose he thought me full of pride and disdain. Besides, he was hardly seated, before I withdrew — I immediately withdrew, and with a kind of

eager haste! — He could not guess the reason of my sudden retreat: — he has perhaps conceived that I meant to show him a marked instance of disrespect! — If so, he is mistaken — very much mistaken indeed! — But if he entertains such an idea, it must undoubtedly vex and mortify him: — I must therefore banish it from his mind — I must receive him less coolly this evening — and especially I must be careful not to quit the room: — Certainly! — I'll keep him company — I'll remain with him — I'll remain until he takes his leave for the night.

How is this? — the parish clock strikes, and I count as far as six — not a stroke more! — Let me consult the fun-dial — the shadow of the needle is only at six! I must then, when the

clock struck five — I must have been I know not how it has happened, — but I have not this day been able to do or to hear any thing right ! I am angry with myself for these unaccountable mistakes : but at the same time I am glad it is not so late as I imagined : — I began to be afraid he would not come : and, to tell you the truth, sister, I am somewhat desirous of seeing him again. My desire is quite natural — for, in short, I am as yet unacquainted with Monsieur Dolerval. It is true indeed I feel a disposition to be prepossessed in his favour : but Ha ! a knock at the door ! — this time I am sure I am not mistaken ! — I must run to let him in — Adieu, Dorothy !

EMILY TO DOROTHY.

11th July, 5 in the morning.

HOW lamentable is my fate, sister Dorothy! — how mortifying it is to be able to form a good resolution, but unable to keep it! — I could almost dash my head against the wall — I am so angry with myself!

I was not mistaken, sister, when I told you so — the young gentleman was displeased — he was certainly displeased — I am now convinced of it. — He accosted me respectfully — very respectfully: but in his manner I perceived too great a degree of politeness, which to my eyes wore the appearance of coldness. I cannot, however, with-

out injustice to him, omit one observation which I made to his advantage — that, notwithstanding the air of constraint and dissatisfaction which he exhibited, I could plainly perceive in him a secret apprehension of displeasing: and this union of noble pride and uncommon goodness of heart impressed me with sentiments of esteem and gratitude for him. Accordingly I felt anxious to give him a distinguished reception. Nor were my efforts unsuccessful: for I soon perceived that he was pleased with the manner in which I endeavoured to repair my former fault. His countenance assumed an air of contentment and of friendly goodwill, which gave it in my eyes an inexpressible charm. On my side also, I felt a certain internal satisfaction, which it is difficult to describe, but delightful

to experience. So far matters proceeded well.

Unfortunately my uncle happened to ask his friend whether the object of his late journey was long to remain a secret —

"That journey," replied the young man, "was of the highest importance to my sister's welfare. I am not at liberty to say any thing farther on the subject. It would be in vain to urge me to disclose the motive which induced me to undertake it : — that is a secret which belongs to Madame D'Etiolles. My own secrets shall never be concealed from you : but I have no right to reveal those of my sister."

I presume, Dorothy, you will be

pleased with that answer: — I confess I was delighted with it: and I must do my uncle the justice to say that he appeared satisfied with his young friend's reply.

Monsieur Dolerval after this continued to entertain us with accounts of his sister — in a word, there was no end to the praises he bestowed on her. — It is said that lovers are enthusiasts! — I am unacquainted with their language: — but how charming, how winning it must be, if, in extolling their fair ones, they use such animated expressions, as this tenderest of all brothers employed in praise of his sister! — I listened to him in transport undescribable. — Alas! how cruelly were my raptures dissipated by a fatal retrospect to the events of my unfortunate

life! "How great reason," said I to myself, "has Madame D'Etioules to bless her stars, that have given her such a youth for a brother! and I — hapless woman! — what crime had I committed, that heaven should condemn me to be the sister of the savage Varmont?" — In short, Dorothy, this mortifying comparison, this dreadful contrast, wounded me to the very soul. — I vainly endeavoured to calm the agitation of my bosom — but, overpowered by the intolerable weight which hung upon my mind, I felt the deep sigh ready to burst forth from my heart, — the drops of sorrow from my eye, — and was obliged to quit the parlour, and retire to my chamber, where I vented my grief in a copious flood of tears.

After a long paroxysm of affliction,

I recollected that my absence would again injure me in the opinion of our young visitor. — My tears immediately ceased to flow, and I hastened back to the parlour. On my re-appearance, Monsieur Dolerval earnestly inquired whether I found myself ill: — but it was in such a tone! in a tone which I well deserved. — His countenance was no longer the same: — he offered violence to his feelings in his efforts to conceal his affliction, — and in a few minutes took his leave of us.

My uncle, on the other hand, was seized with an unaccountable desire of sleep! he maintained that it was time to go to bed. — It is true that the clock had struck eleven: — but some accident must have deranged the clock: for how could it be possible that five whole

hours should have elapsed since the young man commenced his visit? The clock must certainly have been too fast! I was persuaded that such was the case yesterday evening: and what has since fully convinced me of it, was, that I found the night uncommonly long. Twenty times I awoke, imagining it was broad day. But it was the moon—and again and again the moon—whose light deceived me.—It seemed as if the sun would never rise again! But then, what folly in my uncle to depend upon the striking of the hours! How I pity those people who cannot measure time without the assistance of a clock!

I am angry with my uncle—I am angry with Dolerval!—Dolerval retired the moment he saw me re-appear!

What could have induced him thus to hurry away? — He was again offended, I suppose: — and, as sure as I live, he has set me down as guilty of a second instance of disrespect to him! — Why did I not stifle my grief, and remain in the parlour? How can I ever gain friends, if I behave in this manner? And when my cruel persecutors come to renew their attacks, where can I hope to find a protector? In vain may I cast my eyes around — in vain look for a friend who shall think it worth his while to undertake my defence: Thus I shall perhaps be reduced to fly from my enemies, even before they make their appearance: — perhaps I shall ere long be obliged to seek — I know not where — another asylum, to conceal my terrors, my shame, and my despair.

MURVILLE to DOLÉVAL.

Brest, July 13.

A Plague on such correspondents, I say! — how you led me astray by your ambiguous phrases — “ I have just seen her — she looks well — her dangers are all at an end ! ” — Do you know, I immediately took it into my head that you had by some chance met with my ungrateful fair one, and were eager to gratify me with a recital of the happy adventure. — But, how great my disappointment! My good brother did not even condescend to make the slightest mention of her — never once thought of offering me a single word of consolation! — An entire letter is taken up with a sister and a brother! where,

as you ought to have known, that, to a lover — especially to an unfortunate lover — the most agreeable subject — perhaps the only one that ought to be mentioned — is the mistress of his heart.

I thank you nevertheless for the good news you have imparted to me. My sister is safe — I am delighted to hear it, but am not surprised. Although I knew her to be possessed of a most dreadful stock of sensibility, I never once imagined that this affair would prove fatal to her. I have no faith in those violent attachments which induce a disconsolate woman to follow the object of her affections to the grave. But a circumstance at which I must justly be astonished — astonished indeed beyond all expression — is that the happy

Eleonora should already "look very well — better than I ever thought her in the days of her greatest beauty!" — How! Dolerval! — so speedy, so complete a recovery! Whence this miraculous cure? — But you affirm it to be the fact — and I must take it for granted. I can only suppose, then, that our sister has been wise enough to follow my prescription, — and that Bovile, completely forgotten, has already had a successor in her affections.

You are angry at this supposition? But let me tell you that no part of your letter has escaped my notice. I perfectly understand what you meant so delicately to insinuate — "The unfortunate eagerly embrace shadows!" — I congratulate the unfortunate on their happy invention: — it was indeed full

time for our sister to embrace something more substantial: and, notwithstanding the sober discretion of your language, and her long-tried virtue, I am firmly convinced that such is the very plan she has adopted. Oh! so much the better for the charming widow! 'tis thus, that, at the age of twenty-two, and in the bloom of beauty, the state of widowhood may be rendered agreeable. I congratulate her on the prudent resolution she has formed: and in reaping the rich harvest of happiness which awaits her future years, let her not forget how much she is indebted to me for my good advice, which she ought to have followed long before.

As to your arguments in favour of the possibility of Bovile's resurrection from the dead, I allow them their due share of

ingenuity : but I leave you to judge of their force, when contrasted with the following recent intelligence transmitted to me by an eye-witness of the whole transaction. At the same time let me caution you against divulging the particulars, unless you wish to embroil me with the correspondent who has made me this confidential communication.

“ We were in the latitude of the Azores, when an English fleet of superior strength appeared in sight. Notwithstanding our inferiority, our commodore felt it his duty to protect the mercantile fleet he had under convoy ; and he did it accordingly. But when the signal was given for retreat, it was evident that the Pallas could not obey it. It was equally mani-

“ felt, that, if our ships had but conti-
“ nued the engagement one half hour
“ longer, they would have succeeded
“ in disengaging that vessel from the
“ enemy, and saving the whole of the
“ merchantmen. But these advantages
“ were overlooked, and she was left
“ exposed to the cross fire of three fri-
“ gates and a ship of the line. In such
“ a situation, eager at least to wash
“ out with the blood of the enemy the
“ stain which the French flag was
“ likely to receive from the cowardice
“ of his fellow captains, the brave com-
“ mander of the *Pallas* maintained for
“ three hours the unequal combat. At
“ length, about sun-set, his frigate,
“ shattered on every side with the ene-
“ my's shot, was seen to go to the bot-
“ tom. A few of the sailors escaped in
“ the long-boat: but the intrepid Bo-

“ vile, observant of the oath by which
“ every commander is bound to be the
“ last in quitting his ship, must have
“ sunk with the vessel. — Cruel thirst
“ of gold ! — the victors, eager for spoil
“ and plunder, pursued the merchant
“ ships, and left their fellow-men to
“ sink unaided in the waves ! Of all
“ the crew of the Pallas, eighty alone
“ escaped destruction ; and, as an accumulation of the misfortune, the
“ captain is not among the number of
“ the prisoners. The base enemies of
“ that brave man have completely succeeded in their detestable schemes :
“ and the unfortunate Bovile has perished.

“ But their vindictive malice was
“ not yet satisfied with the sacrifice of
“ his life : — they steered for the port

“ of Tercera, in order to repair the
“ damages they had sustained in the
“ engagement. Hardly were they ar-
“ rived, when a court-martial was hastily
“ summoned, which has affixed a
“ brand of infamy on the memory of
“ Bovile, and sentenced the whole of
“ his property to confiscation. — Hor-
“ rible transactions !”

I forbear to copy the remarks added by my correspondent. You see, Dolerual, the naked facts speak sufficiently of themselves. My mind recoils from the picture with disgust and horror. Let us turn our eyes from it, and direct them to more pleasing objects.

Let me tell you, then, that your last letter, taken all together, was to me absolutely unintelligible — downright

nonsense ! — You were certainly out of your wits when you wrote it : or, if you have not yet quite lost your senses, you are — the only alternative — you are undoubtedly in love : — for, in short, what am I to think of your reminding me of a “ journey ” which you had never mentioned to me before ? what can be the meaning of that “ singular adventure,” and of that “ surprise ” and “ confusion,” that you talk of ? — Come, Dolerval, let me hear you honestly confess that there is at length a wench in question. Acknowledge it at once, and do not attempt to exclude me from your confidence. You would have reason to repent of your reserve towards me : for it is not sufficient that chance has thrown you into the road to happiness — your inexperience stands in need of a guide to direct

your steps. And, then, only consider how happy it is for Eleonora that she has taken my advice! Be assured, Delaval, I wish *you* equally well. You must not therefore, either the one or the other of you, conceal any thing from me. I'll undertake to regulate your little love-affairs with the most tender solicitude. I intend, according to circumstances, to point out to you both the surest and most expeditious means of attaining the object in view. I consent to reveal to your sister all the arts of attack, provided she will promise not to repulse the besieger. And as to you, I'll let you into the whole secret of defence, and furnish you with a counterplot to foil every stroke of the besieged. Thus, if you do but exert yourself to repair the time you have already lost, you may, no doubt, one day

overtake me in the paths of pleasure ; and the hope of your success already affords me some consolation under my present misfortune.

Yes, Dolerval, I am involved in misfortune ! I have not yet been able to obtain the slightest intelligence of Mademoiselle Terville. A spy whom I keep near Varmont, assures me that she cannot be in Paris. Am I to suppose then that my very good friend has not carried her off ? that the little gipsy was of herself able, without assistance, to escape from me ? — I begin to think that such was the case ; and I feel hurt and mortified at the idea. More than once have I caught myself in the very act of regretting the deceitful girl : and on such occasions it immediately occurs to me, that, if I had employed more

gentle measures, I might perhaps have won her affections. The thought sets me almost distracted! — Oh! if ever I again meet with the charming creature! if I ever again find her, I shall watch her so closely, as not to leave it in her power to fly from the happiness which awaits her.

In the mean time, however, I have picked up a snug little acquaintance in this city — one who will help me to kill time when I have nothing better to do. But that is mere transient amusement — nothing more. In company with the greatest beauties, I feel a certain vacuum in my heart, which no other Oh! let Mademoiselle Terville once more make her appearance, and I am ready to abandon the whole sex for her.

DOROTHY to EMILY.

Paris, July 11.

WHAT dreadful intelligence — what consolatory intelligence — I receive at the same moment, my dearest Emily ! How many subjects of the deepest affliction and of the most lively joy I find in that long series of letters * which unfold to me the particulars of your fate ! Those dreadful suspicions, then, were but too well founded ! — suspicions which struck me with such hor-

* It seems that Emily had put into the post-office at once all the letters she had penned at different times, from June 13, to July 7, inclusive. At the time when this answer was written by Dorothy, it appears that she had not yet received any of these letters in which her sister makes mention of Dolerval.

ror, that I at times felt a degree of indignation against myself for even consenting one moment to harbour them.

— The infamous wretch ! When with visible exultation he was summing up to me the property he would enjoy in case of your death, he was pronouncing your intended doom ! When he took post with such secrecy and dispatch, he was hurrying away to murder you ! When, with hell in his heart, he took his leave of me, he was setting out to assassinate the gentlest, the most amiable, the most innocent of human kind—my sister, and his own ! Oh ! God ! almighty God, who art terrible in thy judgments on the wicked, where are now the punishments inflicted on the murderous wretch who embrued his hands in the righteous blood of Abel ? How soon shall hell's profound

abysses yawn to swallow up a monster whose very tread defiles the face of the earth? does thy justice sleep? has thy hand forgot to hurl the red-hot bolt of vengeance? — But, my Emily yet breathes the vital air! — the outstretched arm of the Almighty has snatched her from the bosom of the deep! — A thousand thousand thanks to his gracious mercy and goodness!

You are alive, Emily! Happily I had ocular demonstration of the fact — happily the hand-writing of my dearly-beloved sister — that hand-writing which is so familiar to my eyes — had afforded me unquestionable proofs of your existence, before the perfidious wretch came to exult in my sight and hearing, on occasion of your supposed death. It was this very day — this

morning — that the monster defiled my parlour with his presence. Alarmed at the idea of his attempting to add some new crime to the black catalogue he had already furnished, I so far did violence to my feelings as to go down and meet him. Ruthless tiger ! What savage joy sparkled in his eye ! He had just received from Brest, and hastened to communicate to me, the depositions taken on the spot, which confirmed the loss of the Centaur, and consequently your tragical end.

“ Her husband,” added he, “ soon followed her to the other world. He is now no more : — that hero, for whom my father affected to entertain so high an esteem, is no more : — and what you will no doubt think worthy of remark, is, that before his death he

dishonoured and degraded his own character. The hand of justice is already extended to seize on all his property — with the exception, however, of what belonged to his wife. Thanks to the steps which I have already taken, her fortune will be restored to me, with the proviso that I shall be accountable for it to your sister, in case she should ever again make her appearance.”

At these words I was unable to repress my rage and indignation. — “ Make her appearance ! ” cried I — “ inhuman wretch . . . ! ”

My Emily, I was on the point of betraying you — on the point of betraying myself. — I perceived my error, and, immediately checking myself, repeated in a gentler tone, “ Make her

appearance! inhuman wretch! would you be glad that she should?"

He answered with the most perfect apathy, that "it might indeed be very agreeable to see you again, but that he would ever think it a very mortifying circumstance to be obliged to refund so considerable a sum of money."

— He added not a word more, but, in order to disburthen himself of a heap of papers with which he was loaded, he abruptly called in his servant. — It was *Lafleur*.! — At the sudden approach of the man whose hand had aimed the poignard at the breast of Emily, a movement of horror seized me. But soon recollecting that the wretch had been your deliverer, and considering him in that single point of view, the tear of sensibility started from my eye :

and, had I not been with-held by the iron grating which separated us, I would have fallen at his feet — I would, in the overflowing of my gratitude, have returned him a thousand thanks for not having entirely steeled his heart against the feelings of humanity. — Meantime, Lafleur, — whether it was that he took notice of the first impression which his appearance had made on me, — or rather that the bare sight of the sister of Emily was sufficient to shake him to the soul — Lafleur, I say, looked abashed and dismayed. He turned pale, — I observed him lean against the wall for support — and then sit down, ready to faint away. His master took no other notice of his situation than to ask him whether such fainting fits were common with him. — The wretched servant repeatedly

answered, "No," but in a feeble tone. "So much the better!" cried the savage Varmont: "for if the returns of that weakness should become frequent, you and I must absolutely part."

At this last *trait*, fearing that I should be no longer able to restrain my indignation, I hurried away from the spot, and abruptly put an end to our interview.

Thus, then, your murderer is to reap the fruits of his crimes! The spoil of your fortune is to enrich him! and I am condemned to suffer it — unable to prevent it! — Alas! of all the blessings of this world, life is the only one that now remains to you: and if through my indiscretion you should be deprived of that, my own death would be the con-

sequence—grief and despair would put an end to my existence. — But be not uneasy on that score, my dear Emily : — you may depend on my caution — you may rest assured, that, sooner than suffer him to extort from me your secret, I'll consent to his planting a dagger in this bosom where I keep it locked up,

As to what regards your present situation, how can I pretend to advise you ? what information, what directions, can you expect from my inexperience ? The only service, my dear Emily, that I could pretend to render you on the occasion, would be to consult with that lady who boards in our convent, and who is so obliging as to receive your letters under cover, and convey them to my hands. But tell me, do you not

think that such a consultation might be attended with danger?

Meanwhile, do not neglect any precaution which can contribute to your safety: — redouble your vigilance — carefully conceal from all mankind the knowledge that Emily de Varmont is yet in existence. — Above all things, summon your whole strength to bear up against misfortune. Where is the mortal who does not stand in need of courage? This life is nought but a series of trials and afflictions. Oh! if I were to give you a picture of those to which I am here exposed, you would perhaps think, that, hard as is the lot of Juliette the servant-maid, it is enviable, when compared with that of Dorothy the nun.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, July 18.

AH! let him seize on my fortune, unmolested! I consent to the sacrifice — for I do not choose to reduce him to the alternative of restoring my property, or depriving me of life. — Let him seize his prey! but at least — and it is the last wish respecting him that is extorted from me by the feelings of nature to which his heart was callous — at least may he experience no pleasure in the possession of it, — may the insupportable recollection of the crime by which he obtained it, incessantly haunt his imagination — may the pangs of remorse rend his heart — in the

frantic delirium of guilt, may he constantly hear the mournful accents of my voice — may he, during the gloom of night, see my gory spectre stalk before his eyes — may he in short become the most wretched of mankind, and by the bitterness of his regret at length obtain mercy and pardon of the Almighty !

As to your part, Dorothy, I charge you never more to mention his name to me — unless it be to inform me of his repentance.

I would by no means have you to consult the lady whose advice you offered to procure for me. It would in fact be dangerous to impart my secret to any person whatever, without the most urgent and evident necessity. —

Adversity, my dear Dorothy, is an efficacious instructor. Under her auspices I seem doomed to pass the mournful days of my youth: and in a short time her severe lessons have enlightened my ignorance, matured my reason, and formed my judgment. It is on the cautious circumspection which she has taught me, that I depend for counsel in cases of difficulty or danger.

Already I begin to perceive that I was wrong in entertaining so humble an opinion of my own powers—I see that it is not absolutely impossible for me to excite sentiments of benevolence in the heart of somebody. Monsieur Dolerval has for some time past regularly come every day to spend the evening with us. I was much mistaken when I supposed that the presence

of a third person would be a restraint on the freedom of his conversation, or prove in any wise disagreeable to him. On the contrary he is delighted to find that I remain with my uncle and make one of the party. I sometimes hear him congratulate Father Sévin on his happiness in having his niece under the same roof with him — a niece so “so charming,” is the expression he has often used.

Another circumstance, which equally contributes to lull my apprehensions, is, that I perceive my uncle growing every day more and more attached to me. There would be no end to the detail, if I once undertook to enumerate to you every instance of marked attention which I experience from him. There is hardly any kind of work which he

does not think too laborious for Juliette — scarcely any kind of food sufficiently nice for her. He would expend his last farthing to gratify me, if I would suffer it. Were I inclined to acquiesce in such arrangement, he would undertake the whole management of the family affairs, so that I should have no other employment in the presbytery than walking about, eating, drinking, and sleeping.

You may perhaps be curious to know how we pass our days here. I shall say little of the morning part: — that is devoted to domestic concerns, and offers nothing worthy of remark. But in the afternoon Monsieur Dolerval pays us a visit, and generally finds us in the garden. My uncle is hard at work; but I cannot obtain permission

to bear a part in his labour. If I attempt to handle the spade or the rake, Father Sévin is displeased, and says I am not strong enough for such rough work. If I set about planting a few stakes, Monsieur Dolerval prevents me, and says it will spoil my hands. — Would you believe it? I am not even permitted to water the flowers. — And *à-propos* of flowers, we every day cull a quantity : — in the evening Monsieur Dolerval makes them up into a *bouquet* for me : and I must own that the *bouquet* of his making is better composed, and has the colours blended with more taste, than that with which Father Sévin insists that I shall decorate my bosom every morning.

About sun-set the falling dew interrupts our horticultural labours, and

obliges us to take shelter within doors. Father Sévin takes a light supper; after which we spend our time in familiar chat: but it is principally Monsieur Dolerval who supports and animates the conversation. — He relates the pleasures and the incidents of his boyish days, — the occupations and the amusements of his youth. It is certain that the details into which he enters on those occasions derive their principal interest from the manner in which they are delivered: — and in truth, sister, you cannot conceive what a charm this young man can impart to the recital of the most trifling circumstance. — And let me further observe that at such times I have reason to think he sets some value on my opinion: for, in fact, although he always speaks well — speaks perfectly to the purpose — yet he never

shows the slightest symptom of being pleased with what he has said, except at the precise moment when he discovers in my countenance the signs of approbation. — In due course of conversation, my turn comes: — Monsieur Dolerval inquires respecting my family, the place of my birth, the first objects of my attachment. But do not imagine that his questions proceed from idle curiosity, and a want of something better to fill up the time. No — by no means — it is impossible to mistake his motives. I can easily perceive that it is the interest he takes in his neighbour's welfare that prompts him thus to overwhelm me with interrogatories. And observe, sister, whenever he happens to put me a question of a delicate and embarrassing nature, my unclè steps in to my assistance, and Monsieur Dolerval

invariably seems to regret that the answer does not proceed from my own lips.

In this manner our nights pass with a rapidity which to me is unaccountable. — How happens it that the clock regularly strikes twelve the moment after Monsieur Dolerval has taken his leave of us?

I assure you, Dorothy, I find great truth in the observation, that there is no condition of life, — however hard it may appear at first sight, — which has not some consolatory circumstances, some pleasures, annexed to it : — and, every thing considered, the station which has fallen to *my* lot, begins to appear to me very supportable.

DOLERVAL to MURVILLE.

Tours, July 19.

I Could not think, my dear brother, of showing your last letter to Madame D'Etiolles. In it you treat our amiable sister with a degree of irreverent freedom which astonishes me: for, in short, I have often heard it said, that, even the greatest libertines were, in the midst of their licentious irregularities, still forced to pay some respect to virtue. — Excuse me, Murville: I would not for the world give you offence: but neither can I suffer Eleonora to be outrageously insulted. — What! had not her long and exemplary trials entitled her to expect so much candor on your part, that you should at least suspend

your judgment for a while, before you ventured to condemn her? — However, since it becomes necessary that you should be furnished with additional proofs of her just claims to respect, I shall one day be at liberty to adduce them : and then, my dear brother, powerful conviction will compel you to acknowledge that there does exist such a thing as faithful and constant love.

Perhaps also the time may come when you will no longer suspect me of indulging base and groveling desires. It is true indeed, that, if ever I happen to fall in love, the object of my passion may, not impossibily, be one of those who are commonly called the inferior class, and who are treated with contempt and scorn by persons who falsely style themselves their betters : — it

may be some girl whom blind fate has thrown into an obscure station ; — but at least I shall perceive so perfect a contrast between her degrading condition on the one hand, and her exalted sentiments on the other, as to make her appear as much out of character in her humble sphere, as so many others are in the midst of their riches and grandeur. She shall not, in consequence of a brilliant education, have her head filled with those mistaken notions of superiority, domination, and excellence, which are instilled into the youthful minds of persons of exalted rank : but she shall possess that innate sentiment which can accurately distinguish between what is praise-worthy and what is censurable, — that nice and delicate discrimination which can, without the aid of study, assign to each

truth its proper place : — simple nature shall have taken pleasure in inspiring her, without labour and without expense, with what all the efforts of art can rarely excite in your well-educated fine ladies — a taste for useful employments — a love of the more substantial virtues — and an aptitude for every amiable accomplishment : — but, above all things, her heart shall possess a greater portion of real nobility than falls to the share of the daughters of kings. — Finally, she shall not attract notice either by stateliness of demeanour, or showy pomp of dress ; but shall appear to greater advantage with the simple decoration of a rose or a lily, than the richest dames adorned with purple and diamonds : and, though yet in the bloom of youth, she shall at once display all the captivating attractions of

that age, and the more engaging charms of maturer years : — she shall in the most consummate degree unite in her person beauty, dignity, and grace — in a word she shall be a perfect phoenix. — Should such a woman exist as I take a pleasure in describing to you — or even one still more rarely accomplished — you, I know, would call her simply “a wench;” but I should call her the queen of the universe — and make her the idol of my heart. But, in order to gain her affections, do you once imagine that I would be tempted to have recourse to your instructions and experience? Alas! what could you teach me, that were worth the trouble of learning it? After a long study of your lessons, I should only have learned to please that part of the other sex who are incapable of real love.

No, Murville ! if I began to feel my heart subdued by the strength of a passion which might soon decide the fate of my future life, you are not the person whom I ought to make my confidant on the occasion. No ! Eleonora alone would appear a fit depositary of my secrets ; and gratitude would require that I should communicate them to her without reserve. Nevertheless, before I would venture to make such an avowal to her as she has made to me, I must be certain that I could, after her example, entertain, pure and unaltered by absence or length of time, a passion that were opposed by prudential considerations, and thwarted by adverse events. I must be certain — not that the object of my affections were deserving of them — for it is impossible not to esteem the woman we

love — but that I myself were worthy of still continuing to adore her, although fate should refuse to make her mine. In fact, how shameful would it be, if I were under a necessity of receiving lessons of delicacy and constancy from any human being ! but, above all, what a disgrace, if I afterwards found that my bosom only harboured a transient flame which any trifling difficulty were capable of extinguishing ! How could I, under such circumstances, bear the reproaches of my sister, who has fostered so constant a passion in the midst of regret and privation ? How could I endure to hear Eleonora accuse me of having, even under her own eye, been guilty of an unpardonable profanation of love ?

I now proceed to the only part of

your letter which was at all interesting to me. Unfortunately it is also the only point on which I thought your reasonings right. It is not without grief and mortification that I feel myself obliged to make this acknowledgment : — but it evidently appears that my hopes respecting my sister's friend were unreasonable : — the melancholy detail which you have sent me, seems to afford but too convincing proofs that Bovile is no more.

Before I conclude, my dear brother, I have one favour to request of you : — excuse, I entreat you, the freedom with which this letter is penned. — I readily conceive, that difference of opinion, when it proceeds from a difference of sentiments and inclinations, may in time operate to the diminution of

friendship. But that friendship which I entertain for you, shall never cease to exist in my bosom : for I coincide with Madame D'Etiolles in the opinion, that, notwithstanding the contagious principles of the world, your heart still retains a sufficient portion of native goodness to make you one day see and acknowledge your errors. — Adieu, my dear brother ! I shall with the utmost impatience expect the return of the post.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, July 24.

YES, my dear Dorothy, I assure you that I begin to reconcile myself to my situation. My uncle is indeed a most excellent man. There was, I own, a something in him, which at first I disliked — it was that propensity to mirth — I had nearly said, childish mirth — which the most trifling incident was capable of exciting. My silent melancholy and his playful merriment constantly produced such a contrast as was to me extremely painful. I often felt my inward grief increased by his gaiety. — I cannot venture positively to assert that Father Sévin took notice of this unfortunate disposition in his niece :

but it is certain that his behaviour and his language have undergone a very material alteration. I do not say that he is become peevish, or addresses me with any harshness of expression: I only mean that his cheerfulness is now more attempered, less boisterous, more reserved, more gentle, more engaging — in short, almost as charming as that of Monsieur Dolerval. And, now I think on it, Dorothy, the sole cause of the change is probably this — the good man, without once perceiving or even suspecting it, gradually assimilates his character to the happy disposition of his young friend.

I have also made another observation with respect to my uncle, which was no less flattering to me. — No doubt, sister, you recollect Father Sévin's *fa-*

yourite phrase— that phrase, which astonished me so much on the day of my arrival at the presbytery — and which, by its equivocal meaning, kept me in a state of dreadful alarm, until, with a frankness unexampled and yet full of respect, my uncle gave me an idea of the inconveniences annexed to his station, — protesting at the same time that the expressions of his regret had no particular reference to me, since it was his constant custom, he said, to repeat the same thing to every body that came in his way. — Well, then, Dorothy, he certainly was accustomed incessantly to repeat that phrase on every occasion; whether connected with the subject of the discourse or not: and, notwithstanding all he could say to banish my alarming apprehensions, those tiresome expressions gave me a secret disgust.

You will therefore not fail to partake of the satisfaction which I feel, when I inform you that my uncle is gradually correcting himself of that fault likewise. At present, the exclamation never escapes from him, except when his heart is too full to suppress it. And even then he so far offers violence to his feelings as to spare me the pain of hearing him utter it. On those occasions, however, his countenance, exhibiting the marks of deep thought and rumination, always shows me before-hand that the moment is approaching when the sense of his misfortunes, too acute to be any longer borne in silence, is about to force from him the avowal. He is himself conscious of the approaching crisis; and lest I should hear it — lest it should give me pain — he suddenly starts up, quits me, and re-

tires to a distance, there to sigh out that melancholy phrase — “ Priests should be married ! ” — I say “ *sigh it out* ” — and the expression is strictly appropriate — for I am not acquainted with any other in the whole language that can so well describe the affecting inflexion which his voice assumes when he pronounces those words. — It is then, and only then, that his voice appears to me to possess that tone of tender melancholy, those accents of an impassioned soul, which breathe from the lips of Monsieur Dolerval when he sings a favourite ballad.

A-propos, yesterday the two friends indulged themselves with a little music. — On Father Sévin’s bass I shall be silent : — but Monsieur Dolerval sang a few sonatas in a very pleasing manner.

his whole frame trembled while he sang it — his cheek was suffused with crimson while I applauded his performance — and he appeared highly pleased when I requested him to leave it with me. — My uncle, too, wanted to obtain possession of it. But let him sing his own songs — he shall not have mine, till I have got it perfectly by heart—but that I shall soon accomplish, Dorothy ; — for, behold ! at the very moment in question I instinctively hummed the concluding lines.

My want of circumspection was near betraying me. I was for some minutes very strongly tempted to sing in my turn, and sit down to the piano. This whim—supposing it to have been a whim—was not blamable on my part: for, in short, although we ought not to be

vain of our talents, neither ought we affect to undervalue or despise them. Now you know that among the various accomplishments with which my father endowed us in spite of Madame Varmont, music was a principal one — and one in which I was far from unsuccessful. — Monsieur Dolerval, I own, plays very tolerably, and sings remarkably well. Nevertheless my voice is not inferior to his; and at the piano, he is certainly not equal to me. This I may safely venture, to declare, without incurring the charge of vanity — and the same thought occurred to me at the time. — Strongly tempted to bear a part in the concert, I took a pleasure in anticipating the surprise of of Father Sévin and his friend. — Several considerations, however, came in to check my inclination — prudence for-

bade me to give the good priest a specimen of my performance, and thereby unnecessarily discover the falsehood to which I had a few days before been reduced for the sake of concealing my accomplishments. Besides, would not my conduct in the whole of this affair have worn the appearance of something very disobliging with respect to Father Sévin? — This last reflection, above all others, having influenced my determination, I had easily reconciled myself to act the part of a passive auditor, and proceeded no farther than expressing my approbation of the performance. I had resolutely sustained the character for some time, when some unaccountable impulse suddenly prevailed over my caution, and, without reflecting on what I was about, I instinctively hum-

med over the concluding lines of Monsieur Dolerval's new song.

Luckily the surprise which appeared on the countenances of the two friends, gave me almost immediate notice of my error; — luckily I had only hummed the words in a half-smothered voice, and could still disavow my knowledge of music. Monsieur Dolerval, nevertheless, pressed and entreated me to try the words and the tune together: — I could not resist his entreaties: but I took care to sing without rule or method, nearly like a young beginner who is just learning the gamut. This, however, was a needless precaution: for chance so ordained matters, that my voice at that very moment faltered and became indistinct. I was never-

thelefs highly complimented by the gentlemen, who both affured me that I ought to cultivate fo defirable a talent. My uncle renewed his offers of instruction: but Monsieur Dolerval asked the preference — and asked it in that more engaging, more perfuafive tone, which is natural to him; fo that I am now involved in the ftrange and embarrassing predicament of deciding which of the two friends I fhall fuffer to take the trouble of teaching me what neither of them underftands near fo well as myfelf. — However, I'll confider of it — I'll temporife — I'll But methinks a long time has elapfed fince dinner — and the moment is now come, when when I cannot avoid making my appearance in the parlour. — Adieu, my dear Dorothy!

DOLERVAL to MURVILLE.

Tours, July 28.

NO answer, my dear brother, to my last letter! — No doubt, it contained some harsh truths: but, having done no more than what was my duty, can you think me worthy of blame? — Nevertheless, if I have offended you, I shall never forgive myself.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

August 2, midnight.

THIS day, my dear sister, I received your letter : and it is with pleasure I learn by it, that, from the bare picture I have given you of my uncle, you have conceived a high esteem for him. No doubt you are right in remarking that there are few men in his station who are at once so amiable and so good as he. But I am somewhat astonished, that, in speaking of his friend, you content yourself with simply observing that I seem to entertain for that young man a very particular friendship. Yes, Dorothy, I do — and he deserves it — no other man living is so well entitled to it. — Were you in my situation, Do-

rothy, tell me, I pray you, could you refuse him your warmest attachment? But I see how it is — I have perhaps not done him sufficient justice in my letters to you! I have perhaps neglected to paint him in his true colours! — If so, it were an unpardonable omission.

It is not improbable that I may have omitted to enumerate his talents, his graces, his beauty, the crowd of external accomplishments with which he is adorned: for in the detail of such particulars there is nothing that can be very interesting to either you or me. But if I have neglected to present you with the enchanting picture of his gentleness of disposition, his simple unaffected manners — if I have not sufficiently praised all the qualities of his heart, all the virtues of his exalted soul,

— there I confess I stand chargeable with a fault which you ought never to forgive — an act of injustice, of which I never could have thought myself capable.

In fact, is it not surprising that this young man, whose conduct might safely challenge the scrutiny of the severest censor, should show, for his neighbour's faults, that excess of indulgence which might sometimes appear even to border upon weakness? Is it not very extraordinary that he, who would not allow himself to offer the slightest offence to his deadly enemy, should entertain no resentment for any injury received from his friend? Is there not something truly admirable in that extreme sensibility of heart united with an unruffled gentleness of disposition? — I will give you,

Dorothy, a striking and extraordinary instance of it.

My uncle, I must acknowledge, is no longer the same man : but I was too precipitate in congratulating myself on the change in his disposition, and drawing a favourable omen from the circumstance. The alteration which has taken place in him, did not stop at the precise point where it appeared desirable. At first a gentle melancholy succeeded his departed cheerfulness : but unluckily that was soon followed by a deep and gloomy dejection. — Monsieur Dolerval had never before seen him in such a condition. — If the inconveniences resulting from this strange metamorphosis were confined to me alone, I should only lament my uncle's misfortune, and to the best of my power

er endeavour to console him. But it unluckily happens, that, in his atrabiliary fits, he never vents his anger on his niece, to whom he might perhaps have some right to behave in that manner — but directs the whole storm of his ill humour against his friend — his generous friend — who so evidently sympathises in his secret sufferings, and who endeavours, equally with me, but, alas! with as little success, to find out their cause.

Last night the clock had already struck twelve before we had looked into a collection of choice ballads which Monsieur Dolerval's polite attention had induced him to bring to us. My uncle, by an unaccountable deviation from his usual custom, had shown no inclination that we should indulge in

music on this occasion. Monsieur Dolerval, however, thought he might venture to sing, once at least, my song — his own song, I mean. — He did so: — but, short as it is, my uncle's countenance betrayed evident symptoms of impatience for the conclusion. Nor was this all: — his caprice was still farther carried to an astonishing length: for at the very moment when the young gentleman was bidding us adieu, Father Sévin, who, during the whole course of the evening and night, had not shown the smallest inclination to look at a single note, suddenly addressed his young friend in a peevish tone, and asked —

“ Does Madame D'Etiolles never again intend to honour me with her visits? Has she made a vow against ever

coming here and having another concert?"

"Excuse my sister;" replied Doler-
val: "her mind is at present deeply
engaged — quite taken up with"

He was going to continue, when my
uncle suddenly interrupted — "Poo!
Poo! 'tis not with her grief that her
mind is taken up!"

"From the tone in which you make
the assertion, might not one conclude
you are sorry for the circumstance?"

"At least," exclaimed Father Sévin,
"I may well be surprised at it:—I
may be surprised that a woman, whom
I saw, not six weeks ago, ready to die
with grief for the loss of her husband,

should so soon appear perfectly reconciled to her fate. — What are we to think of a woman's attachment, if it cannot survive its object above a month? What ideas are we to entertain of that grief which she does not think it worth her while to indulge for a longer period? — Every time I reflect on those things, I feel myself the less inclined to regret that priests are not allowed to marry!"

At this discourse, Dorothy, Dolerval appeared petrified with surprise and grief. Nevertheless, instead of giving way to anger, he said to him in an affecting tone, " Ah! my friend, what have I heard? — how much you have hurt my feelings!" — and at the same time stretched out both his hands to Monsieur Sévin, who, instead of rush-

ing into his arms, started back some steps. For my part, I felt on this occasion the emotions of anger rising in my bosom : but Monsieur Dolerval did not suffer his usual gentleness to be in the smallest degree ruffled. He retired overwhelmed with affliction, — but did not — for I perfectly recollect every circumstance of his behaviour—he did not show the slightest symptom of resentment.

“ Good night, Juliette !” said Father Sévin, who now remained alone with me.

“ Uncle,” said I, “ he is gone home quite dejected !”

“ Well !” replied he, “ the words

have escaped me: where is now the remedy?"

"He will never come here again."

"Never come again!" repeated he with visible uneasiness — then, in a more gentle tone, "You are too easily alarmed, Juliette: but, make yourself easy on that score — he will come again: — I do not usually treat him so ill: and besides, niece, have not you given him a polite and friendly reception? — Why should he punish you for my fault? But even setting this consideration out of the question, I know him to be incapable of harbouring resentment against me for a hasty unguarded expression. — Depend upon it he will come again — I'll be responsi-

ble for his appearance, my dear child good night I am becoming gloomy, peevish, insupportable: — my child, do not be angry with me on that account: — rather pity me — let Dolerval also pity me — let him pardon me! — do you hear, niece? — let him pardon me, I pray you!"

My uncle now retired, and left me deeply affected with his speedy repentance — affected indeed to that degree that I could not restrain my tears from flowing. Nevertheless, in spite of his assurances, I felt an uneasiness on my mind — I was afraid that Monsieur Dolerval would not renew his visits. I knew that the greatest mortification he could possibly receive, was any insult offered to his sister. — But, no matter! he came this evening — he came earlier

than usual — and the moment he saw my uncle at a distance, he ran to meet him. — My uncle attempted to speak — was going to make an apology — but Dolerval stopped him short, and tenderly embraced him.

What think you of all this, Dorothy? what think you? — answer me, I pray you, as soon as possible.

DOROTHY to EMILY.

Paris, August 4.

MY dear Emily, you totally misunderstood my last letter: but I think I have perfectly understood all yours. I think I can perceive on your part a certain passion impeding the operations of a most excellent judgment; whereas, on the other hand, friendship, which from a distance coolly views and considers every circumstance, enables me to see deeper into those affairs, notwithstanding my total want of experience. Who could have thought, however, that Dorothy, immersed in the obscurity and ignorance of a convent, should one day be obliged to remove the dark veil with which Emily suffered her

eyes to be blinded amidst the broad
sunshine of society ?

Yes, my poor dear sister, with your
eyes shut you tread a road environed
with rocks and precipices ; and at each
step your danger increases. Stop short,
I entreat you — deign to give one mo-
ment to serious reflection — commune
with your own heart — and so far con-
quer your reluctance as to give me can-
did answers to some questions I have to
propose to you.

Whatever may happen, surely you
never can forget your generous hus-
band : — the recollection of his kind-
ness and generosity can never be effaced
from your remembrance. — Your hus-
band ! you had conceived for him a
high esteem, a lively gratitude, a re-

spectful friendship :—nevertheless what were the ideas you entertained concerning Bovile ? what the language you employed in speaking of him ?

At present — for it will be the more easy to judge by comparison — at present, in what terms do you speak of young Dolerval ? what ideas do you entertain of him ? Whence proceeds that greater degree of animation in the eulogiums you bestow on him ? What name shall I give to that kind of enthusiasm with which he seems to inspire you ? In short what more could you either say or think, if he had inspired you with what is commonly called love ?

Love ! the very name will make you shudder. Be not alarmed, however : —

I think you are not yet too far gone, to recover:

My dearest Emily, I think I see you standing on the verge of the precipice; and I warn you of your danger. As to the means of avoiding it, I leave them entirely to your own prudence and discretion, — to that love of virtue which will, I doubt not, inspire you with the most laudable resolutions. — Provided that you are but apprised of your dangerous situation, my mind is easy — easy, did I say? — ah! very far from it: — it cannot be so, while I see such a host of new troubles added to those by which you were before oppressed.

But that love — that fatal love — was it intended to prove the bane of human happiness? — Why does it de-

light in tormenting with restless desires even those hearts which are destined never to feel its flame? — You, my dear sister, have felt its influence, too soon for the peace of your future life : — and as to me, eternal listless moping will perhaps be the consequence of the vow I have made to renounce it for ever. — What a destiny !

EMILY to DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, August 6, noon.

GRACIOUS heaven ! what a light you have cast over the abyfs on whose brink I trod unconfcious of danger ! — Merciful father ! was not my fate rendered fufficiently deplorable by the cruel paffions of others ? or was it decreed, that, in addition to my wretchednefs, my heart fhould be torn by the struggles of criminal and inaufpicious love ? Was it not fufficient that I fhould be an object of pity ? — muft I alfo, to fill up the meafure of my misfortunes, become an object of contempt ? — Bovile ! oh ! Bovile, my generous lord ! has the grateful recollection of your kindnefs fo foon vanifhed from my me-

mory? and that more tender sentiment which your virtues so well deserved though they could not excite it — has it been suddenly kindled in my bosom by a stranger? — What! I already offer an insult to your departed shade! Your grave scarcely yet closed, I already burn with an unhallowed flame!

Conceive, Dorothy, the excess of my surprise and grief, when, this day for the first time, I perceived that my criminal neglect had not been confined to my husband alone: — whilst your friendship, ever tender, ever attentive, anxiously watched over your sister's welfare, that sister, wholly engrossed with her own concerns, scarcely bestowed a thought on your situation. I only entertained you with a detail of my errors, and ungratefully forgot your

sufferings. Since my arrival in this place, I do not think I have written to you a single line of consolation.— How powerful, then, must that attachment prove in its maturity, which, while yet in embryo, has been able to make me neglect my duties, offend my benefactors, and fix my whole undivided affection on a single object—an object to which, but a moment before, I was a perfect stranger ! By what efforts shall I be able to oppose its mighty power ?— what resolution shall I adopt ?— where shall I hide myself ?— what must become of me ? alas ! unfortunate woman that I am !

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Eleven at night.

YOU will, no doubt, observe, my dear sister, that I have retired earlier to my chamber to-night than usual. 'Tis because Monsieur Dolerval has already taken his leave, and my uncle immediately dismissed me.

I take advantage of this occurrence to communicate to you a piece of happy news. This morning I too sensibly partook of your alarm respecting the state of my heart: but at this moment I have good reason to think that I am very far from loving that young man so much as both you and I seemed to apprehend. Yes! the more I reflect on the

matter, the more firmly I am convinced that hitherto I have only yielded in some measure to the impression which he laboured to make on my mind : — I have only shown a little gratitude in return for his civilities, his politeness, his attentions of every kind. I feel indeed, that, even in this, there would perhaps be some danger ; and I promise you to stand on my guard against it.

Attend, sister, to what I am now going to write — and you will, I hope, be satisfied with the motives which have induced me to change my opinion, and inspired me with a greater degree of confidence in my own resolution. — For two days past, the two gentlemen have had together very long conferences — very earnest — very mysterious ; — they whisper together —

they retire — they avoid my company. — At first I was struck with this deviation from their usual politeness ; — this afternoon, especially, their long whisperings began again ; and I could plainly perceive that they were more than usually cautious of admitting me to a knowledge of the subject of their conference. This distrust on their part struck me as extremely impolite, and sensibly hurt my feelings. At length, however, they returned to me ; but appeared elated with a certain secret joy, which they were unable to conceal. These symptoms of indifference for what I might be supposed to suffer in the mean time, did not escape my observation. — In addition to all this, when they sat down to sing, it was not my favourite ballad they sang, but that common song which you have often heard—

stinguish....yes ! tis Dolerval's voice !
no ! — it can't be what business
 can he possibly have here at this
 unseasonable hour ? 'tis most cer-
 tainly he ... I drop my pen to listen ...

Yes, Dorothy, it was Monsieur Dolerval ! — “ Very well,” said he —
 “ very well ! I'll go to the church in the
 mean time.” — “ I shall not keep you
 long waiting,” replied my uncle.

What, in the name of wonder, can
 be the meaning of all this ? — what
 business can they have in the church ?
 — I know not how it is, my dear Dorothy — but a gloomy presentiment
 a crowd of circumstances combining
 all those mysterious conferences !
 the air of satisfaction which Monsieur Dolerval wore in the evening ! ...

and the song too! . . . how dreadfully are my eyes opened! . . . what! can it be possible? . . . I shudder at the idea! . . . stop — I'll try to go down stairs without noise — I'll listen — I'm determined to know the bottom of it Gracious God! if it should . . . I quit you for a moment, my dear Dorothy — I shall soon return.

Heavens! what have I heard? what have I seen? . . . oh! the traitor! . . . adieu to all happiness! adieu to . . . But my hand shakes, Dorothy — I am unable to guide my pen — my whole frame is in a universal tremor — to-morrow I shall write — to-night 'tis impossible.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

7th August, eight in the morning.

NO! I cannot proceed — I am as weak as I was last night — thunder-struck — unable to undertake the fatal narrative. — During the whole night I could not shut my eyes — I do not love him — be assured I do not. — Cruel man! how he has deceived me! — ungrateful! — Pardon me, generous Bovile! it is perhaps but too certain that I should at length have loved him. But it is all over — I never shall entertain any affection for him. — Be not uneasy, Dorothy — I am determined never more to look on him but with hatred. — Tomorrow — this evening — some time in the course of the day — whenever I am capable — I'll tell you the whole.

MURVILLE to DOLERVAL.

Brest, August 7.

NO! my good brother, I am not at all angry. The silly flourish you have employed as an appeal to my reason, have not given me any offence, but have excited great uneasiness in my bosom. If you continue much longer in the same train of thinking, I look on you as incurable : and what a mortification it would be to me to be obliged to join in taking out a bill of lunacy in order to have you shut up in a mad-house !

What ! Dolerval ! your only anxiety at present is lest you should prove unworthy of your Dulcinea ! you tremble at the idea of a profanation of love !

The highest degree of bliss to which you aspire, is that of burning with love's undying flame—though deprived of the object of your passion. — What a falling off, Dolerval! Where the deuce have you learned this fine doctrine? — You must certainly have got by heart the whole history of Astræa, and Amadis of Gaul! — That is the mischief of it! Young folks like you should never be suffered to look into a romance : — sooner or later, such kind of reading cannot fail to turn their brain. Thus, I myself, when a boy, took it once into my head to roam about the country, with the resolution of becoming a hermit, — and for this single reason, that my tutor, who was an arrant devotee, had for some time obliged me to read the “Lives of Saints” every morning and evening.

But to return to your letter—the humble object of your adoration is “of the inferior class!” — How well I had guessed that this was the case! But be not apprehensive that I shall blame you on that score—I know, that, from time immemorial, such has been the established custom. — At Paris it is the coquetish dowagers who stand on the watch to ensnare young green-horns just fresh from college: and the moment they see a novice of the kind, they seize on him, and, whether he will or not, insist on initiating him in all the mysteries of the *bon-ton*. It is true, indeed, that our country beauties of forty or fifty do not all possess that happy instinct: — in general they leave the training of the young men to the care of the Abigails: — of course, it was perfectly in character that you,

like the rest of the young men of Tours, should, for your first flame, single out a beauty of the inferior class. But let me observe that you are mistaken in accusing us "who style ourselves their betters," of despising such wenches: — we do not despise them when they are handsome. I am willing to suppose that yours is tolerably so: but tell me, in the name of wonder, where you discovered this phoenix of low life? — In your sister's family? — No, that cannot be — for I well know that your prudent tutorefs is careful to keep no woman about her who has the smallest pretensions to youth or beauty. — Then I suppose it is Madame ***'s waiting maid — or Madame *****'s — or Madame ****'s. I should however be better pleased that she belonged to my sister; for you might then pay her your

devotions more conveniently, and besides have a better opportunity of watching her : — for, mind me, Dolerval — it is absolutely necessary to watch her. You must be careful that no sparks come hankering after her — you must bar the door against those young fellows in the garb of English jockeys, whose persons display all the charms of youth and beauty. Since they can vie with you in both these respects — and since you reckon birth and education as nothing — you must cautiously guard against their rivalry. Nor should you be less suspicious of those tall, active, well-built gentry, who at a single bound can take their station behind the loftiest coach : — such as these are very formidable rivals. — Equally so are those plump rosy butlers, who often enjoy a better fowl and bottle than they

suffer their masters to taste of. — Believe me, Delerval, if your fair one has seen any service, a pampered fellow-servant, such as I have described, could hardly fail of obtaining a preference over you. What a number of enemies, then, you have to dread ! enemies both powerful and formidable ! I fancy I see them, in your absence, crowding round your “ queen of the universe,” — offering incense to “ the idol of your heart,” — regaling her ears with all the fine language of the hall and the pantry. They honour her — they idolise her — they offer her their incessant homage — they pursue her from the kitchen to the garret ! — Beware ! brother ! beware ! for, in the class from which you have so philosophically chosen the object of your affections, ’tis impossible to tell what rival you ought most to dread

— whether a kitchen Valmont, or a Lovelace from the stable. — Beware! I again repeat — beware!

Above all things, take care not to preach to your fair one such a sermon as you have sent me in manuscript. I wonder you did not show it to our sister: all that fine rant about love and morality, with which you regaled me, would have been highly charming to Madame D'Etioules, who takes such a pride in your purity and your nullity! — But stay a while! — you will at length escape from her tuition: — you will soon come into the hands of a new preceptor, who will not fail to give you lessons of a different kind. You'll see, Dolerval, you'll see how long your “queen” will be satisfied with your respectful ecstasies — whether she will

like the idea of being always an "idol" — how she will relish a lover who is ready to "adore," but feels no inclination to obtain the object of his adoration! — Indeed, indeed, brother, I sincerely pity your case! — I preserve your letter — I preserve it as a monument of human weakness. — Alas! what beings we are!

You conclude, too, by making me an offer of pardon — but on condition that I shall embrace your way of thinking! — That specimen is alone sufficient to show that you receive all your instructions from a woman. — Adieu, dear brother!

EMILY TO DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, 7th August, two in the afternoon.

YOU recollect, my dear Dorothy, I had recognised that voice which I have never heard without emotion. At that instant, urged by my anxious desire to clear up certain cruel suspicions which I dreaded to see realised, I interrupted my letter to you — darted from my chamber, and went down stairs without light and without noise. I was soon at that part of the stair-case where there is a communication between the presbytery and the church. — I paused a moment on the landing-place — not that I was stopped by the door — for my uncle, in his hurry, had neglected to shut it — but because he had hardly

as yet reached the church himself, and I fancied I still heard his foot at the bottom of the stairs. In this situation I remained for a while, all tremor, all attention. — The voice of an ungrateful man soon struck my ears—"Come," said Monsieur Dolerval, "come, unite two lovers !" — Unable to restrain the eager curiosity which these words had excited, I pushed open the door which concealed the scene from my sight; and, without being myself exposed to view, I could give my eyes full scope to range through every part of the church.

In the aisle I too plainly discovered the perfidious Dolerval eagerly conducting my uncle towards the altar, which had been carefully adorned for the occasion, and where the priest alone

seemed to be wanted. The torches of Hymen blazed on it, and at its foot stood a woman! — cruel woman! — Yet I could not forbear examining her with particular attention; and — would you believe it, Dorothy? — would you believe that my perturbed imagination could produce such an illusion? — Yes, let me confess my weakness — and disclose to you the prodigious strength of that passion which reigns in my bosom — of that strange fascination, which, raising a deceitful mist before my eyes, shows me in every object the likeness of a man whom for my happiness it were to be wished I should never see again. — That woman, in her impatience for the happy moment, turned her eyes back towards her lover, who was hastening the steps of the priest, which did not keep pace

with his wishes. Suddenly I felt a strong curiosity to discover the peerless charms of her who was preferred to me: and, notwithstanding the distance, I thought it would not be impossible for me to distinguish the features of that stranger who must be so captivating in the eyes of Dolervall! — I did plainly distinguish them — and, such was my infatuation, that, in the features of this woman, I fancied I could discover a most striking resemblance of her lover. — Yes! the longer my eyes were fixed on her, the more I was persuaded that her countenance presented to my view the image — the living image of the ungrateful man of whom her beauty has deprived me. — I know not why that fancied resemblance increased my affliction: but it is certain that my distress was rendered more poignant by

the idea of the superior charms which I supposed my fortunate rival to possess: and it is equally certain that I would give the world to be able to suppose her less charming.

While I stood petrified with astonishment, and the most melancholy reflections crowded on my imagination, Monsieur Dolerval again spoke, and his words were a death-blow to my heart.—“Haste,” said he, “to crown her happiness, and mine.”

“Wait one moment,” replied my uncle. “I know you will be angry with me:—but, when one is in so great a hurry, he generally forgets something.”

At these words he turned back; and

I now clearly saw, that, to avoid being discovered, I must immediately return to my chamber. In my agitation, however, the more haste I made to get up stairs, the more I increased the difficulty of a speedy retreat. It is true I had reached the second story, and was out of Father Sévin's sight, when he came to the landing-place which I had just quitted. But I remained motionless at my chamber door, not daring to open it, lest the creaking of the hinges should betray me. My caution, however, was ineffectual —

“No, no! I was not mistaken,” said my uncle, — careful, however, to direct his voice in such a manner as not to be heard by those in the church — “here has been somebody watching us. — Juliette, Juliette! what is the cause

of this restlessness which keeps you awake at so late an hour? Go to sleep, my child! go to sleep; and when you rise, beware of mentioning to any human being a single syllable of what you have heard or seen. This marriage is to remain a profound secret."

At these words he returned into the church, — drew the door close after him, — locked it, — and left me confounded beyond all the powers of description.

I confess however, Dorothy, that the mortification of this discovery was at that moment one of the least of my afflictions. — Abandoned in solitude to my own cutting reflections, I had full leisure to probe the wound which my heart had received. I discovered its

mortal depth, and deplored—alas! too late deplored that cruel and deceitful passion, which, but a moment before, I had endeavoured to conceal even from my own eyes!

Be not uneasy, however, Dorothy:—though the fatal flame once burned in my bosom, it is now extinct:—nor need you fear that it will ever blaze out anew. What! could it be possible that I should ever more love an ungrateful man who lavishes his tenderness on another object,—a deceiver who has stolen my affections by the external show of an attachment at once lively and respectful,—a traitor, who, during the silence of night, and at the moment when he supposed me wrapt in sleep, could repair to the foot of the altar, and there bind himself by an irrevocable en-

gagement never to adore any other woman than my rival? — my rival, did I say? — no! she is not my rival — she is the wife of Monsieur Dolerval. Can the husband of another woman be any thing to me? — The husband of another! — is it possible? — oh! — Dorothy

A circumstance which ought to afford some alleviation to my sorrows, is to see how much my uncle sympathises with me. Excellent man! this morning he carefully refrained from every thing which could have the slightest tendency to remind me of my fault of last night. But at dinner, notwithstanding my utmost endeavours to disguise my chagrin, he could not avoid noticing it. "What ails you, my child?" said he: "you make me very uneasy. Be assured I shall exert my every effort

to support my own misfortune without uttering a complaint: but to see you distressed, would be insupportable to me. Is there any thing in my conduct which has caused your present melancholy? If so, I should hold myself unpardonable, though unintentionally guilty. I do every thing in my power to give you satisfaction: and you certainly are not aware how dearly I pay for it."

At these words, Dorothy, I felt myself hurt, and thought it necessary to interrupt him. "Ah! sir," said I, "you need not remind me of your favours: you see I am perfectly sensible of them in their fullest extent:—I am convinced that many others would have a less claim to my gratitude, though they should spend much greater sums of money . . ."

"Money!" exclaimed he with honest indignation — "money! — and do you think I allude to" — here he stopped short, thinking, I suppose, that it was improper to dwell any longer on the subject — then assuming a milder tone, "Well, then," said he, "be it so! — you may think so, if that too is necessary for your peace of mind! and since I appear guilty of a momentary want of delicacy, I conjure you to pardon me."

In a short while after, reflecting on the events of the preceding night, I could not refrain from shedding a few tears. — Father Sévin, perceiving my condition, wept also, and "In the name of friendship," said he, "what ails you, my dear child?"

"Last night, Sir, you united two lovers ——"

"Yes, my niece: and I assure you it was not to me a pleasing duty."

"'Tis done then? he is married?"

"Well! suppose he were?"

"Suppose he were!" exclaimed I in an agony of despair, and covering my face with both my hands—"if he were, I must never see him more!"

My uncle remained silent: I urged him to an explanation, as if any further confirmation were necessary to convince me of my misfortune. — The honest priest did not immediately yield to my importunities — but continued for a

considerable time to walk up and down the room with long strides, visibly agitated, and apparently at a loss how to act. In such a delicate situation, my friend — for he well deserves the appellation — my generous friend was no doubt afraid to confirm an event of which the bare apprehension had already so deeply affected me. — At length he spoke — but the only answer he made to my inquiries, was to utter twice with a profound sigh, and in a tone of which I felt the full force, “Poor child ! poor child !”

I then recollected that the hour was now approaching at which Monsieur Dolerval was accustomed to visit us. I thought it not impossible that the cruel man might perhaps carry his perfidy to a degree of audaciousness, and dare to

appear again in my presence. Besides, the sympathy which Father Sévin had expressed for me, tended not a little to inspire me with resolution. — “Give me leave, uncle,” said I, “to retire to my chamber for the remainder of the evening and night.”

“How! my niece! — and am I to be so long deprived of?”

“I request you will not refuse me that indulgence.”

“Indulgence!” repeated he — “But I have already promised — and I now repeat my promise — that your every wish shall be a law to me, however painful my compliance may prove. — Go, my child, since such is your desire; and remember that in this house you are

absolute mistress of your time and your actions."

I thanked him, Dorothy, and, as I was going out of the room, he bid me adieu in a tone of compassion — but of the gentlest, the tenderest compassion. I was considerably affected on the occasion. In short, Dorothy, I have the strongest reason to think that my uncle too labours under the weight of some hidden grief: and I can plainly perceive that it is those alone who have tasted the cup of misfortune, who can by a single word afford comfort to others under similar circumstances. — Feeling however that I stood much in need of solitude, I ran to my chamber — locked myself in — and sat down to write you this letter, which I moisten with my tears.

DOLERVAL to MURVILLE.

Tours, 8th August, eleven in the morning.

SO! brother! you vent all your wit and ridicule on me in revenge for my having produced better arguments than yours! but you may safely do so:—such of your jokes as personally concern me, leave no disagreeable impression on my mind, I assure you. — As to the indecent sarcasms which you have uttered against a girl equally virtuous and charming, I look on them indeed as so many blasphemies: nevertheless I pardon them, — convinced that you would never more be guilty of such injustice, if you were better acquainted with the adorable niece of Father Sévin. What refined sense, what understanding the

possesses ! — what an assemblage of amiable qualities, which seldom unite in the same person ! — what numberless accomplishments ! — But I must quit you, to go make inquiries concerning her. Yesterday I had not the happiness of seeing her : — she was not well. — Her uncle said it was but a slight indisposition : nevertheless my anxiety on her account kept me awake the whole night. — My mind will not be at ease until I have seen her — I fly to the presbytery.

Noon.

What a thunder-stroke ! — what can I have done to offend her ? — of what crime have I been guilty ? — I reached the presbytery — she did not expect me at that hour — but I did not observe

on her countenance, that agreeable surprise which she was far from endeavouring to conceal whenever in my evening visits I arrived before the usual hour. —
— Uneasy, I accosted her, and in a tone of eagerness inquired whether she was recovered

“Recovered, Sir!” interrupted she
— “recovered of what?”

“Of your yesterday’s indisposition.”

“You were misinformed, Sir: — I assure you I was perfectly well.”

“How then came we to be deprived of the pleasure of your company?”

“The pleasure of my company, Sir, is not very great. — Besides, I do not

know that my uncle expected any visitor yesterday:—as to my part, I assure you I did not expect any.”

“That declaration, Madam, is to me very mortifying — may it somewhat surprisef me.”

“Surprises you! — And could you then never conceive that your affluencies in this house might perhaps not be equally agreeable to all parties?”

“Permit me to observe, Madam, that this is a severe lesson, and which I think I have not deserved.”

“Deserved, or not, Sir, I recommend to you to study it, and profit by it.”

During this conversation, my friend

Father Sévin was at work in the garden. — Surprised to see, that, instead of going to him, I was quitting the presbytery, he ran after me and called me back. — I stopped but for a single moment, to tell him that if he continued to set any value on my friendship, he must in future cultivate it at my house, since the entrance of his was thenceforward forbidden me. — I did not wait for an answer, but ran home overwhelmed with despair — yes, brother, downright despair!

EMILY to DOROTHY,

9th August, eight in the morning.

I THANK you, dear Dorothy, for the consolations which you so liberally afford me — but I no longer stand in need of them — I am better — much better. — Let me tell you — Monsieur Dolerval . . . I was mistaken! — Attend, sister, attend.

Yesterday I had so far offered violence to my feelings, as to tell him that I would never see him again. — But so great an effort having quite exhausted my resolution, I passed the remainder of the day and the entire night in tears. During the whole of the evening my uncle appeared deeply afflicted at my

grief, and, this morning again I saw him still more strongly affected. "Poor child ! Poor child !" he repeated every moment : at length he fell into a profound rêverie—he walked up and down the room with hasty steps — anxiety sat on his brow — he appeared irresolute — dissatisfied with himself —, and I thought I heard him mutter these words — "The deception has lasted too long — 'tis a cruelty ! — it would be downright perfidy !" — At that instant he suddenly turned towards me, and addressing me in hasty accents, "How cruel," said he, "is the grief which preys upon your heart ! — it wounds me to the soul ! — But, take comfort, my child — wipe away your tears : — he is not married."

"Who ? — he ? uncle !"

"He — himself," he said, "you say he is not?"

"You say he is not? — repeat it, I pray you — repeat it!"

"I repeat that he is not married. You misconceived my answer yesterday: I grant it was somewhat ambiguous, — and there I was to blame. My fault, to be sure, was a grievous one: — but what can be said, my child? — I am a man, and liable, like every other man, to be under the dominion of Pardon me, Juliette! — have some pity"

Here my uncle stopped short — probably because he saw me tremble and turn pale. — A moment before, I had risen from my seat with animation — I had given a degree of vehemence to

my discourse and gesture: but now I was obliged to sit down again — a sudden weakness pervading my whole frame.

Father Sévin, nevertheless, must have imagined that there was nothing alarming in my condition; for, instead of giving me any assistance, he precipitately ran out of the room: — in fact, that kind of faintness which I experienced, was not painful, and almost immediately passed off.

Meanwhile, my uncle, not making his appearance, I apprehended he was angry, and went to the garden in quest of him. — He had, as it were, concealed himself in the most retired and obscure corner — I perceived him standing like a statue — his head, and, both

his hands leaning against the trunk of a tree. His attitude was that of a man rapt in profound meditation. He must indeed have been very deeply immersed in thought, since he neither saw nor heard me, though I approached almost to his very elbow. — “Ah!” said he, “it was the excess of joy!”

“No, uncle! it was the excess of astonishment.”

At the first sound of my voice, Father Sévin started — “Why do you not respect my privacy?” said he — “Why do you come here to watch and surprise....?”

I could not suffer him to finish the sentence — I saw his face bedewed with tears — and immediately exclaim-

ed — “How unhappy should I be, uncle, if my joy were to you a cause of grief!”

“No! no!” said he, taking me by the hand, and eagerly pressing it in his — “no, my child! I cannot be happy unless you are so.”

“But those tears!”

“Let them not give you any uneasiness — how can you tell from what source they flow? — perhaps from the pleasure of seeing your sorrows at an end — and having it in my power at the same time to give consolation to my young friend, who is in a state little short of distraction.”

“Distraction? — you think so?”

"Come! I must make complete reparation for my errors."

"And for mine, uncle?"

"I'll go to him . . ."

"Soon?"

"This very morning."

"This instant?"

"Be it so—this very instant.—I'll tell him, in my own name and in yours."

"Why in mine? — can't you confine yourself to telling him that your niece is sometimes a little pettish, but that you will not sacrifice to her caprices a friendship which . . ."

"I understand you — It is I who must bring back Dolerval in spite of Juliette. — It shall be so : — but at least, my niece, be cautious never to speak to him of any thing you may have seen the night before last. I must not, I cannot reveal to you the mystery of that clandestine marriage. Suffice it to say that Dolerval attended on the occasion merely as a witness : and do you rest satisfied with my repeated assurances that such was the case."

This conversation, which I relate pretty circumstantially, eased my soul of a burthen which was beginning to But I must go down stairs — I hear Father Sévin going out. — I do not yet bid you adieu, Dorothy.

Noon.

I have seen him once more, Dorothy

— I have seen him sooner than I hoped, and at a moment when I did not expect him.

I wished for my uncle's return — my uncle, I thought, was a long time gone! I walked back and forwards in the garden, accusing Father Sévin of extreme tardiness. At length, not knowing how to fill up the tedious interval, I returned to the parlour, and sat down to the piano. Some pieces of music lay on the desk — I attempted them — but their length exhausted my patience: I then naturally returned to my favourite ballad, which I played and sang at the same time.

“What a charming voice! what a delicate touch!” exclaimed somebody behind me, when I had made a conclusion.

'I turned my eyes — and — figure to yourself my astonishment — there he stood, listening and motionless, at the door of that apartment, where, thinking myself alone and unobserved, I had given full scope to my voice. — Father Sévin, instead of knocking at the outer door, had let himself in with his master-key, without my hearing him. — He was accompanied by Monsieur Dolerval, who, as I told you before, stood motionless with surprise, and, I might venture to say, with admiration. — Can you think it strange, Dorothy, that in this moment of confusion I should act or speak without consideration? My thoughts wandering I knew not where, I rose from my seat, advanced to Mr. Dolerval, and foolishly enough observed to him that I thought him “very much altered.”

Father Sévin observed my oversight, and attempted to repair it — but, in his over-haste, committed a new one himself — “Altered?” said he — “We are, every one of us, altered — let us now forget our past cares, and talk of the brilliant talents of the discreet Juliette.”

Here a new tide of compliments was poured on me — Father Sévin expressed his extreme surprise, and in the most flattering terms chid me for my former reserve. But much greater was the astonishment of Monsieur Dolerval, who could hardly be persuaded that the uncle was unacquainted with the piece's talents. — They both united in requesting me to repeat the ballad, as if they were afraid that what they had witnessed was only a dream. — My second at-

tempt was not so happy as the former, — perhaps in consequence of the great exertions I made to obtain a more brilliant success. — Certain it is that my voice and my hand trembled at the same time. — I excuse my uncle for having noticed the circumstance with a degree of regret : — but I think Monsieur Dolerval must have been the better pleased with my performance. — Be that as it may, they mutually congratulated each other on the acquisition of an additional performer, who would bring back the happy time when they used to have a concert almost every day. The party is already settled for this evening : — Monsieur Dolerval promises to bring his music-master ; and as to his sister, he hopes that in a few days she will be at liberty — and that she will then be eager to come and “ admire

the talents, and perhaps share in the success, of a competitor certainly worthy of her."

I do not mean, Dorothy, to conceal any circumstance from your knowledge — I therefore own to you that I was not very well satisfied with Monsieur Derval this morning: — I thought I could see in his countenance a greater degree of coolness than of dejection — and his behaviour wore the appearance rather of indifference than reserve. I fancied I could perceive that he was less pleased to find I possessed a valuable talent, than picqued at the idea of my having so long concealed it from him: and from some expressions which escaped him in taking his leave, I would lay any wager that he still imagines my uncle was in the secret, and concurred

with me in deceiving him. How unreasonable ! how unjust ! I can hardly bring myself to pardon him. We shall see, this evening — we shall see, whether he dares to harbour a suspicion by which I feel myself so much hurt. I shall not fail to inform you of it, Dorothy But of what consequence is it to you ? — and I myself — fool that I am ! — is it on such things I ought to employ my thoughts ? — ah ! my dearest Dorothy, once more excuse your Emily ! — you shall certainly have reason to be better satisfied with my next letter.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

August 12.

HOW thoughtless was I! In my answer to your last, I passed over in silence that part of your letter which required the most particular notice. — Yes! I co-incide with you in opinion that Father Sévin has been unable to guard his heart against a fatal attachment for your unfortunate sister: — yes! I have reason to think that the most wretched of all passions — jealousy — has sprung up in that bosom where sensibility reigns equally with generosity.

Yesterday we had a second concert. — I own to you that the manner of our performance would be sufficient to give

me a disgust against music, if that were possible. The moment Monsieur Dolerval appears, my uncle runs to meet him — my uncle gives him a friendly reception — a very friendly one, I must do him the justice to say: — but why does he not suffer me also to show him some civility? why does he hardly allow me time to ask his friend any of those questions of pure civility, which custom requires even between common acquaintances? — Would not one be tempted to imagine from this conduct, that conversation of every kind is tiresome to him whenever there is a third person present who could add to its charms? — Father Sévin urges, teases us — we must immediately sit down to our never-ending concerts. If the pieces are of that kind which is commonly called lively — but which to me ap-

pears extremely flat and insipid — all goes well enough with my uncle. — Very different is the case when by chance we happen to take up any of those really interesting compositions which are full of expression — sweet — tender — or melancholy. Then I enter into the spirit of the piece — I perform with more precision, more taste, more animation. Monsieur Dolerval also becomes more animated, more impassioned — for his heart is all sensibility. But my uncle immediately sets us all astray: — and how indeed can he be expected to keep time, when, instead of looking at the notes, he has his eyes constantly rivetted on his niece and his friend? — In vain we attempt to continue — in vain the music-master's attention endeavours to set him right — Father Sévin is deaf to every thing around him.

Twice during our yesterday's concert his confusion increased to such a degree, that he threw down his bass at the risk of breaking it, and ran to shut himself up in the adjoining apartment. He came back to us, it is true — but to what purpose? — he could not be prevailed on to resume the piece which he had so cruelly interrupted! And how could I utter a single word of complaint? so confused, so vexed did he himself appear at the untoward accident, notwithstanding the smile which he affected to wear on his return. And let me observe one circumstance which gave me very great pain — each time, on re-entering the room where we were, I took notice that his eyes were quite red. I have not a doubt, Dorothy, that, when he hurries away to the other apartment, it is to shed tears.

Another thing which surprises me not less, and which I am perhaps still more sorry to observe to you, is that Monsieur Dolerval no longer testifies for his friend that affectionate interest which he at first seemed to feel for him, and which the unfortunate condition of Father Sévin seems to require. Nay Monsieur Dolerval, except in those rare and transient moments when the powers of music warm his soul and transport him as it were beyond himself, still preserves towards me that air of indifference bordering on disdain, which so much hurt my feelings a few days since. What! ought my uncle's sufferings so soon to have exhausted the patience of his friend? and although the young man might have some cause of complaint against me, is his resentment utterly implacable? — Shall I tell you,

Dorothy ? — so sudden a change in his conduct gives me ample room for reflection and surmise. Father Sévin is inflamed with love and with jealousy: — every circumstance concurs to prove it beyond a doubt: — but then, is his own unfortunate passion the sole cause of his present affliction? Is he not likewise tormented by some dreadful anxiety respecting my fate? Could it be through a mistaken pity, that, on the second day after that fatal night when I appeared overwhelmed with the oppressive weight of my misfortunes, my too generous uncle thought it necessary to deceive me by a cruelly officious fiction, of which he now perceives the error and the danger? In short, Monsieur Dolerval, at present so different from what he was before — is he or is he not married? — My surmises, Doro-

thy, will to you appear dreadful: — but do you remove, if possible — remove from my sight all the objects of my suspicion, which at every moment revives and acquires new strength: — that church! — that altar! — that woman, ever present to my thoughts, and whom, though I but once had a single glimpse of her features, I could point out among a thousand of her sex! — Help me to banish from my memory that spot, which, every day, every hour, I feel myself involuntarily impelled to visit and examine, — that spot where the most ungrateful of men hastened the steps of the priest. Above all things, teach me to forget those words which constantly resound in my ears, and whose import is so evident and so dreadful: — “Come, unite two lovers! — haste to crown her happiness and

mine!" — I ask you, Dorothy, is it natural that a person who is to assist merely as a witness, should show such eager impatience? that he should use such earnest and pressing solicitations? — Alas! what have I written? what ideas are suggested to me by a fatal delusion in which I seem to take a pleasure! Hapless Emily! of what consequence to you to learn whether he be united to another by indissoluble ties — or what sentiments he feels for you? — Alas! your only care ought to be, to examine by what steps you can best escape the evils with which you are threatened by a passion that presents nought but dangers, in whatever light you contemplate it.

But, Dorothy, that step on which I have sometimes thought in moments of

despair — and which you barely hint to me with such evident reluctance and apprehension — do you think it really practicable? Can I suddenly fly from the place which has afforded me an asylum in my misfortunes? — renounce this rural life, whose peaceful charms have almost won my attachment? — abandon the worthy Father Sévin, who did not hesitate to increase his own indigence by relieving mine? and leave him, as the only return for the generous hospitality he has shown me, the remembrance of my ungrateful distrust? Shall I, in my eager haste to fly from an enemy who is too dear to my heart, expose myself to the risk of falling by the dagger of an unnatural assassin? — expose my fate once more to the mercy of fortuitous events? — go from door to door, begging shelter and protection?

and, in my apprehensions of a danger which may now be said no longer to exist since I am acquainted with and guarded against it, expose myself to a thousand new dangers, perhaps inevitable, because impossible to be foreseen? — No! ah, no! I have not sufficient courage to obey the dictates of that foresight and caution which may be productive of such fatal consequences to me at a future day.

MURVILLE to DOLÉVAL:

SO! Monsieur Doléval, it is very difficult to make you speak out! Must I be obliged to extort from you an indirect avowal of what it would be so agreeable to me to hear you frankly confess? — With the exception of this one circumstance, however, I am infinitely obliged to you for your confidence! Egad, you'll support the honour of the family! What! you aspire to nothing less in the first instance than a share in the tid-bits of the church! and at the expense of your dear friend, whom you silyly and snugly rival under his own roof! What a noble *debut*! Such deeds bespeak you a genuine bro-

ther of mine — the undegenerate offspring of the race of Murville !

Nevertheless I have so long observed you to show a vulgar taste, that I am somewhat afraid to allow you all at once to possess truly noble inclinations. I hope I am not mistaken on the present occasion, and that I have not presumed too much in your favour. That Father Sévin, whom you mention — is he not the new rector of St. Cyr, — the young man who is so much attached to you, and for whom you entertain so warm a friendship, — in short, your Pylades, your second self? — an honest fellow on the whole, and who incessantly sighs for the day when priests shall be married? — Oh ! I know the spark, and have more than once predicted to him, that, in spite of his scruples, he would

sooner or later follow the example of the cloth, and take in a niece!

But I would venture any wager that you are not yourself aware how arduous the enterprise you are about to attempt — that you do not know what kind of being a priest's niece is. Well, then, I'll tell you — I'll inform you of every particular — I'll not lose this opportunity of displaying my erudition — for in short I wish you to entertain a good opinion of me.

In days of yore — long — long ago, my dear brother — at a time when neither you, nor I, nor Father Sévin, was yet in existence — in a word, many centuries back, the primitive church did priests the honour to think, and the justice to acknowledge, that they were

men. Consequently every priest who felt himself so inclined, was at liberty to choose a helpmate, to whom he might without fear or blush give the name of wife, — at liberty also to increase the population of his country by the annual present of an innocent babe who was not cruelly condemned to wear the brand of illegitimacy.— Unfortunately, however, a council — the council of Trent, if I am not mistaken* — more sa-

* He is mistaken : — his erudition is quite of a piece with that of his cotemporary young men, of quality. — The fact is this : — No divine law forbids or could forbid the marriage of priests : no divine law stands in opposition to the sacred laws of nature. The old testament allowed the ministers of the altar the full exercise of all their faculties ; and in the new, Jesus Christ gives no precept which infringes on the rights of man. One of his most fervent apostles — St. Paul himself — in his epistles to Titus and Timothy, will

pient than all the councils that had ever been held before — the council of

have bishops to be chaste and continent — but in marriage, not in celibacy — “a bishop must be blameless — the husband of one wife” — of one *wife*, be it well understood. Accordingly, during the first three centuries of Christianity, the priests, who understood St. Paul’s meaning, had wives: of which I have no objection to produce a few instances. — According to St. Jerome — whose word we must not dare to call in question, because a *saint* could not be capable of telling a lie — Tertullian, in his dying moments, exhorted *his wife* to live single. Some of my readers may perhaps think Tertullian rather too selfish on the occasion. — With that I have no concern: my only object is to prove that the great Tertullian, who carried his jealousy of his wife even beyond the grave, must therefore certainly have had a wife. Nor was he the only priest who had entered into the bands of wedlock: — for we find St. Cyprian severely rebuking Novatus, a married priest. But, mind me — he does not reprimand him either for having taken a wife, or for

Trent, in short, decided that priests were made of superior stuff to the com-

loving her to excess, or for indulging too much in her company—but, on the contrary, for having rudely saluted the poor woman with a violent kick which brought on a miscarriage. — Novatus was certainly a bad husband — a downright brute; and I am sorry for it: but at the same time I am glad to observe that a saint took the part of a woman — and the wife of a priest too — and of her children.

Let us now proceed to those dreadful councils. — Unfortunate sons of the church! it was that of Neocæsarea, held in 314, which first laid a restraint on your matrimonial faculties. In its tenth canon it decreed that any deacon, who had not, at the time of his ordination, expressly declared his intention of one day taking a wife, should not afterwards be admitted to the rites of Hymen, unless he renounced his ecclesiastical functions.

• Eleven years after this, the famous council of

mon herd of mankind, and ought to abstain from mingling their sacred blood

Nicea imposed celibacy on all the ministers of the altar, without exception. In the following century, was held the council of Orange, whose anti-natural prudence deposed every priest who did not abstain from marriage. At length the politic Gregory VII. completed the business, and entirely cut off the priesthood from all connection with society and their own species:

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, nevertheless, pope Celestin was still obliged to send his legates into Bohemia to oblige the ecclesiastics to submit to celibacy. The latter, who were staunch friends of matrimony, openly protested that they would not bend their necks to "a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear." Unfortunately however they were compelled to it: and I leave you to conjecture whether the peace of the laical husbands in that country was never disturbed in consequence: — I am content to judge by comparison, and desire no farther proof than what can be furnished by the too patient husbands in this country.

with the impure juices which flow in the veins of a frail woman. — Thus the sacred decree of the council: — but

After thirteen hundred years of barbarism, the voice of reason attempted to obtain a hearing — Charles V. desired that the council of Trent should restore to ecclesiastics the liberty of marrying — but the pope, Paul III. refused to consent to the measure. — I will not take upon me to affirm that this Paul III. was the pontiff who, being urged to declare the motives of his aversion to the marriage of priests, answered, “It is principally their wives and children who endanger the property of the church.” — What an excellent reason! — The same might still have had some weight two years ago*: but at present, when the church has no longer any temporal property to preserve, why deprive her ministers of the sweets of a legitimate union? — Ye prudent and humane legislators! restore to them the right of espousing our daughters, if you wish that they should leave us in peaceful possession of our wives!

* Published in 1791.

Dame Nature, who is not always perfectly Roman catholic and apostolic, has never consented to sanction that episcopal canon. From that period, therefore, in order to obtain satisfaction for this violation of her rights, she has compelled many a Right Reverend publicly to keep a number of handsome mistresses. From that period also, the poor subordinate drudges of the church, not daring to imitate the conduct of their superiors in openly proclaiming their scandal, have pursued the safer plan of marrying a *niece* instead of a *wife*. It was about that time also, I think, that, with a view to make suitable provision for the numerous swarms of natural children that holy Mother Church daily produced, the scheme was adopted of establishing religious

orders, and founding convents and nunneries.

And do you pretend, after this, to poach on holy ground? Luckless wight! know you not that the god of the priests is a jealous, a vindictive god?—Tremble lest the good rector should excommunicate you, and then a demon, obedient to his behest, seize you, body and soul together, and whisk you off in a twinkling, to keep company with his infernal crew!

You have now fair warning, my dear brother. If, nevertheless, you are determined to persevere, let me point out to you the most expeditious mode of carrying to a happy conclusion this adventure, in which you run such evident risk of being damned to all eter-

nity. — The dearly-beloved of a priest must of course have a devotional turn. In treating her therefore with comfits, cakes, and sweetmeats, be sure to present her occasionally with a Madonna in sugar, or perhaps, in preference, a good representation of the gigantic St. Christopher, in which the confessor has done him ample justice in every part. When by these presents you have prepared the way, you may boldly attempt the *tête-à-tête*: — nor will opportunities be wanting. — you have only to attend to the different modes of ringing the church-bell. — Hark! that mournful toll! some poor Christian now breathes his last — now, now is the time for my happy brother to breathe the vows of love! — That sound! it calls the dear uncle to the pillow of a dying parishioner! — haste, Dolrival! haste

to the pillow of his niece! — The reverend father addresses the poor expiring wretch in a strain which alarms his soul within him: — be you cautious to make a better choice of language, so as not to alarm the lady, whose prompt conversion is so important an object with you. In short, while the poor priest is labouring, perhaps in vain, to save a man from hell, do you make haste to conduct a woman to heaven. — Follow my directions, Dolerval — set heartily about the work — and make a beginning this very day.

In some weeks hence I may perhaps encourage you by my presence. I intend to take a trip to Paris, for the express purpose of personally watching the motions of my very good and faithful friend Varmont. I still persevere in

the firm belief that Mademoiselle de Terville, whom I find it impossible to banish from my thoughts, can be nowhere else but in his possession. 'Tis such a girl as her that I could pardon you for adoring! — Oh! brother, what a number of extravagant things you would have said and done for her! — you, whom the rustic helpmate of a country priest has already almost deprived of your senses!

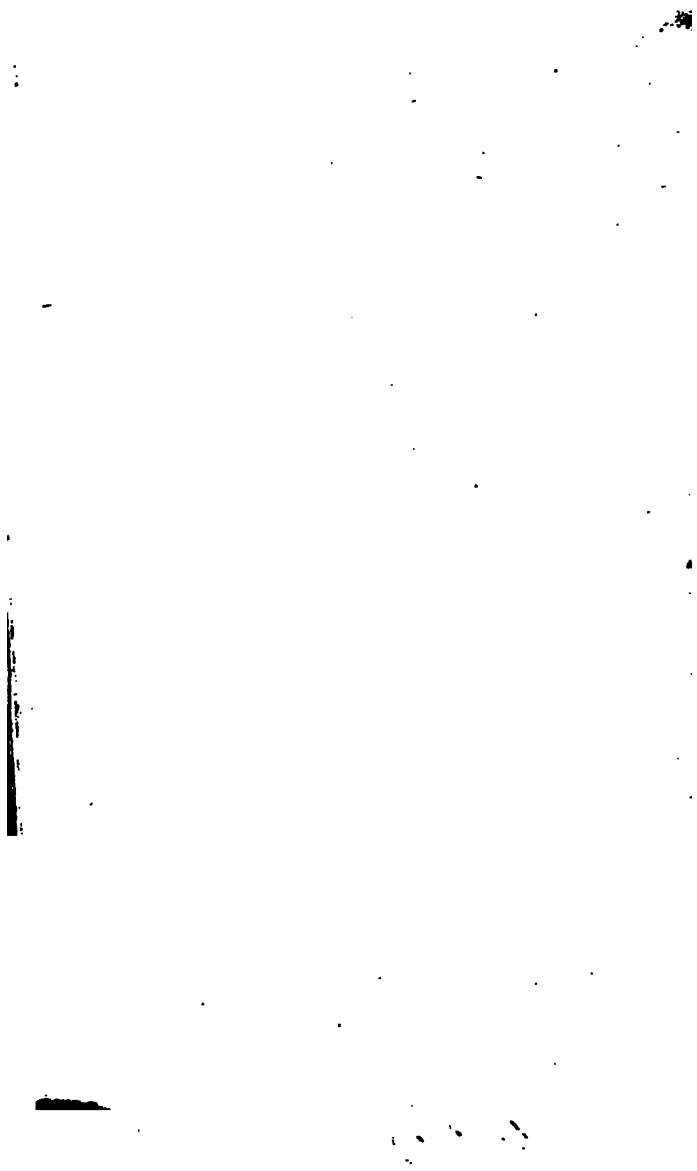
You will of course take it for granted, Dolerval, that I do not intend to pass near Tours without stopping to spend at least four and twenty hours with Madame D'Etioles. — You and I will take a walk together to the pestytery — sha'n't we? — I am truly curious to have a sight of the little niece. — Heavens! if I was to find her the

counterpart of Dulcinea del Toboso !
— Meantime, until the day arrives
when I shall enjoy the agreeable sur-
prise, adieu, my dear friend ! — be
convinced that I love you, and that I
love my sister.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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